# ROSINA:

## A NOVEL.

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## IN FIVE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF DELIA,
*AN INTERESTING TALE,*
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

*LONDON:*
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,
AT THE
Minerva,
LEADENHALL-STREET.

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## CHAP. I.

### IN WHICH THE READER WILL FIND OUR HEROINE SUFFICIENTLY MORTIFIED.

DURING Mr. Nettleby's altercation with our little Crookback, Roſina's feelings were more painful than can be expreſſed. Torn by a contrariety of feelings, her judgment pointed out to her the propriety of acquieſcing in Fitzoſborne's deſire; but her tenderneſs for Lord Raymond ſtifled its dictates. There ſeemed, beſides, ſomething arbitrary and tyrannical in the procedure of Fitzoſborne; and the whole tenor of his conduct diſplayed an aſperity ſo harſh and forbidding, ſo unlike the gentleneſs of affection ſhe had once

been accuſtomed to receive from him, and which ſhe had ever till then connected with his idea, that ſhe ſhrunk from the purpoſe of conſigning herſelf to his guardianſhip with a diſmay and terror which, ſtrongly co-operating with her averſeneſs to be ſeparated from Lord Raymond, determined her to reject the meaſure.

" Fitzoſborne and Lord Raymond, meantime, equally engroſſed by their own reflections, and inattentive to the converſation, had, from time to time, regarded each other with looks of mutual diſapprobation and diſtruſt. Silence prevailed for ſome minutes after Nettleby's departure, and might have continued much longer, had it not been interrupted by Mr. Hume, who, perfectly free from the painful and perturbed emotions which agitated the boſoms of his three companions, retained all his natural gaiety and indifference.

" Pray, (ſaid he to Auſtin, who ſtill continued in the room,) who is that curious little genius that has thrown my wiſe uncle into ſuch a mortal panic?"

" That's young 'Squire Evelyn, Sir, (replied Auſtin;) and, Lord knows, though he ran with ſuch

ſuch a rig about getting his honour's throat cut, he has no more notion of ſuch a thing than the child unborn; only he's a little arch and unlucky, in a manner."

"It is ſtrange, (ſaid Hume,) that with all the old gentleman's boaſted wiſdom and ſagacity, he can ſcarcely ſit half an hour in company, without embroiling himſelf in a quarrel, and ſubjecting himſelf to inconvenience."

"Aye, to be ſure, (replied Auſtin,) quarrelſome dogs will always get dirty coats: there's no helping thoſe things; and his honour was always ſomehow very *obſtropolous* in himſelf, as it were. Many's the good time that he could hardly be kept from falling on me, tooth and nail, and tearing the beard off me; not, I am ſure, that ever I gave him no ſort of offence, as far as I can remember of it."

"I am grown really uneaſy about him, (ſaid Hume.) Come, Mr. Fitzoſborne, on every account it will be expedient for us to ſhorten our viſit: I believe its length has already been rather irkſome to Miſs Mortimer."

"I only wait for your commands, Madam," ſaid Fitzoſborne, riſing as he ſpoke.

"My commands, Sir!" ſaid Roſina, in faltering accents.

"Yes, Madam, I wait to be informed, whether you ſtill retain affection enough for my mother, to influence you to yield to her ſolicitations, and accompany me to Ireland."

"Affection for your mother! (ſaid Roſina.) Can you, for a ſingle inſtant, diſtruſt my attachment, and not deſpiſe and abhor me as the moſt loſt and abandoned of the human race!"

"Profeſſions (returned Fitzoſborne) are very light; and weak indeed muſt be the mind that can be influenced by them, if, when brought to the teſt, they are not corroborated by the leſs equivocal teſtimonies of our actions."

"But why (ſaid Roſina) this violent precipitation! I will certainly return to Ireland; but my objections to reſiding beneath the roof of your father, ſtill continue in their full force. My ſituation was heretofore ſufficiently degrading and humi-

humiliating; but now—— No, I can never conſent to it."

"All circumſtances conſidered, Madam, (ſaid Hume, who had certainly once greatly preferred Roſina, and whoſe pride was a good deal hurt, to think ſhe had an illicit connexion with another, in preference to an honourable union with himſelf, as he had reaſon to ſuppoſe ſhe had,) all circumſtances conſidered, I believe you will not be reduced to the neceſſity of refuſing. Scandal is ſo very infectious, that it is apt even to ſully the purity of the approaching objects: and ladies of unblemiſhed reputation are generally ſufficiently ſedulous to ſhun ſo dangerous a conteſt."

"Scandal! (repeated Roſina, in great emotion;) I don't conceive you. I know not —— I am unable to conjecture what circumſtance in my conduct can have authorized any injurious imputations."

"Faith, Madam, I am no great connoiſſeur in theſe matters: I generally leave them to be decided by the awful tribunal of the tea-table. But the tabbies who preſide there are ſo maliciouſly cenſorious in their inferences, that a young lady who

makes an elopement from her friends, and is found ſome months afterwards enjoying a ſentimental ſeclusion with her favourite Philander, in a ſolitary cottage, is in no little danger of incurring their cenſures."

This ironical and ſevere ſpeech, which inſtantly opened Roſina's eyes, not only to the errors of her paſt conduct, but to the horrors of her preſent ſituation, overwhelmed her with ſuch anguiſh and confuſion, that, had her conſcience joined in the accuſation, and teſtified to the reality of the imputed guilt, her ſenſations could not have been much more poignant. Whilſt her whole frame was convulſed with the agitation of her mind, ſhe in vain attempted to open her trembling lips in her vindication. Almoſt ſuffocated, and gaſping for breath, her head ſunk on the table near which ſhe ſat.

Lord Raymond had beheld the foregoing ſcene with conflicting emotions; and his policy had ſtruggled with the indignation which would have incited him to take an active part in it. But, whilſt he pitied Roſina's diſtreſs, he lamented not its occaſion. Reputation he well knew to be one of the ſtrongeſt bulwarks of female honour; de-

prived

prived of that ſupport, and become an object of contempt to the friends by whom ſhe had been accuſtomed to be cheriſhed with tenderneſs, nay, even beloved to idolatry; betrayed, too, by a fond partiality, "*a traiterous paſſion lodged in her own boſom*;" fate ſeemed to conſpire with his artifices, to force her into his arms: and with joyful anticipation he exulted in the approaching accompliſhment of all his wiſhes.

With ſenſations far different had this ſcene been viewed by young Fitzoſborne. Though many corroborating circumſtances, which ſhall hereafter be related, had concurred almoſt to force him to believe her guilty, that charity which "hopeth all things," that amiable candour, ſo loth to abandon to calumny the object of its eſteem, ſo unwilling to be influenced by appearances, often fallacious, even when apparently the ſtrongeſt, co-operated with a motive ſtill more prevalent, to perſuade him to hope almoſt in deſpite of conviction. Yet, conſcious that he flattered himſelf in defiance of reaſon, ſenſible that attractions, ſuch as Roſina's, might bias even the deciſions of age and experience, his judgment, like a ſevere judge, refuſed its aſſent to the pleadings of his ſofter feelings, and maintained its empire with a rigid ſternneſs.

Neither wholly condemning, as appearances might have inclined him to, nor entirely acquitting as the advocates in his boſom would have perſuaded him to do, he deferred deciding on the cauſe until a day of future trial might afford him leiſure for impartial inveſtigation. Her lovelineſs, meantime, aſſerted its natural claim to admiration: her frailty, if ſhe had been frail, was not of a nature to exclude her from compaſſion; and her ſufferings moſt forcibly excited his ſympathy.

"Will you come, Mr. Fitzoſborne? (ſaid Hume.) It is half paſt ten; and you may eaſily perceive the length of our viſit is highly diſtreſſing to Miſs Mortimer. Beſides, I am exceedingly uneaſy about this good uncle of mine, who ſeems to have ſet out in purſuit of an *ignis fatuus*. I ſhan't be much ſurpriſed to find him ſtuck in a quagmire half a dozen miles diſtant."

Fitzoſborne aroſe, and followed Hume a few ſteps towards the door; then ſtopping irreſolutely, and looking back at Roſina, he ſaid, in a ſoftened accent, "And is this, then, the meſſage I muſt bear to my mother?"

Roſina

Roſina raiſed her head, and endeavoured to reply; but ſomething riſing in her throat, denied her words a paſſage.

"I left Ireland (reſumed Fitzoſborne, in an agitated tone) in the fond expectation of reſtoring to my mother the favourite of her heart; to myſelf, the ſweet companion of my youth! But ſhe diſallows theſe titles; ſhe refuſes to acknowledge the claims of our friendſhip; ſhe prefers an obſcure retreat to the aſylum of her infancy; the — (pauſing for a word,) ſociety, ſhall I call it? I would uſe, if I could avoid it, no ungentle term, of ſtrangers, to the ſolicitations of tenderneſs, to the united incitements of honour, wealth, and fame."

"Sir, (ſaid Lord Raymond, who thought himſelf glanced at by Fitzoſborne in this addreſs, and who, beſide, beheld in him a formidable rival, and dreaded the influence of his perſuaſion,) when the parent of Miſs Mortimer bequeathed her to the protection of Mrs. Fitzoſborne, it is to be preſumed ſhe conſigned her to her guardianſhip, as a ward, to be cheriſhed and protected, not as a ſlave, to be fettered and inſulted. Acquainted, as it is to be ſuppoſed you are, with her motives for

leaving Ireland, you cannot be ſurpriſed at her reluctance to return to a place from which ſhe was driven by indignity, inſufferable to any breaſt that retained one ſpark of laudable ſpirit, one generous wiſh for independence; and it is not very wonderful, that the injurious treatment ſhe has this night met with ſhould have augmented, rather than diminiſhed that repugnance."

"You ſeem very intimately acquainted with Miſs Mortimer's affairs, (ſaid Fitzoſborne, with an air of reſentful chagrin; but, were you in reality her friend, you might repreſent to her how much more conſiſtent with honour and propriety would be a reſidence, if not immediately with her friends, at leaſt under their inſpection, and ſanctioned by their countenance, than an obſcure retreat, expoſed to the diſadvantages of indigence, and covered with the ſhadows of obloquy."

"And to what agreeable retirement is Miſs Mortimer to be ſentenced on her return to Ireland? (replied Lord Raymond, ſarcaſtically.) This gentleman (turning to Hume,) very plainly inſinuates, that, after the ſcandalous deviations of which ſhe has been guilty, ſhe is not to indulge the preſumptuous hope of a reſtoration to her former

former ſituation in Mrs. Fitzoſborne's family, as the immaculate purity of that lady's character would ſuffer pollution from the contagion of her indiſcretion. Is ſhe then to look forward to that pleaſant and eligible eſtabliſhment in the Magdalene Aſylum, which ſhe was promiſed by the old gentleman who juſt now quitted us?"

"To what ſhe is to look forward, may perhaps depend on yourſelf, (returned Fitzoſborne, fiercely;) if you know her to be innocent, ſtand forth boldly in her vindication; if you wiſh her to be happy, embrace the means that are calculated to render her ſo, by ſilencing the ſuggeſtions of calumny, and wiping off the ſtains of diſhonour which your own aſſiduities, innocent as they may poſſibly have been, have affixed to her reputation. Anſwer me in the preſence of this gentleman, Do you know Miſs Mortimer to be innocent of the crime that is laid to her charge?"

"And pray, Sir, (ſaid Lord Raymond,) by what right do you preſume to interrogate me? But I ſhall find another mode of anſwering queſtions ſo little to the purpoſe."

"Lord Raymond, (ſaid Fitzoſborne, with a manly firmneſs,) I came not here to embroil myſelf in a quarrel: I would leave to wild beaſts that ſavage and ſanguinary vengeance which is a diſgrace to the human ſpecies. I would addreſs you as a man; and as a man I would be anſwered. I appeal to your reaſon and your conſcience; I call upon your humanity to aſſert the cauſe of injured innocence; and upon your juſtice, to ariſe in its vindication. Any offence I may have given you, and I meant not to give you any, cannot cancel the obligations of principles ſo ſacred, or authorize the ſuppreſſion of a truth on which all the future happineſs of this young perſon may depend. Will you then declare, upon your honour, that you believe Roſina Mortimer to be innocent?"

"Innocent!" heſitated Lord Raymond, who was greatly diſconcerted at this addreſs.

Much as it was his intereſt to propagate the opinion of Roſina's frailty, it was no wonder that he ſhould be averſe to countenancing it in her preſence. He therefore thought it adviſeable to ſteer a middle courſe, and to evade the truth which he did not dare to violate.

"Inno-

"Innocent! (repeated he;) the term is equivocal. I can, however, declare, upon my honour, that I think Miſs Mortimer an angel, the loveliest of women!"

Fitzoſborne frowned, and bit his lip.

"Your reply is evaſive, my Lord, (ſaid he;) but if ———." He ſtopped abruptly.

"I think *not*, Sir, (returned Lord Raymond, with an air of pleaſantry.) I ſaid Miſs Mortimer was an angel; and angels, you know, are innocent."

"Aye, but, my Lord, (ſaid Hume,) there have been fallen angels."

"And I think there are ſtill!" (ſaid Fitzoſborne, caſting a troubled and reproachful glance at Roſina.) Come, Mr. Hume, I am ready to attend you."

They went towards the door.

"Stay, ſtay! (cried Roſina, ſuddenly ſpringing from her ſeat, whilſt Lord Raymond caught her hand

hand to hold her back;) Fitzoſborne, in pity, in compaſſion, I conjure you not to leave me."

Fitzoſborne was flying to her, when Hume caught his arm, and forcibly detained him.

"O, for a little cotton, to cloſe your ears againſt the voice of the ſyren! (cried he.) But that would be inſufficient: a bandage over the eyes would be no leſs neceſſary. For ſhame!"

"Yet, once more, (ſaid Fitzoſborne, almoſt panting for breath,) Roſina, can you then yield? Will you then conſent to return with me to Ireland! Whatever you are, whatever your conduct may have been, (he continued, in a hoarſe and interrupted voice,) I feel that you are ſtill dear to me! Fallen, though, perhaps you are; perhaps! Ah, would I ſtill flatter myſelf; ſtill ſhut my eyes againſt the ſun, the ſun! No, rather the lightening that blaſts them! Yet, there are degrees in miſery; there are gradations in guilt; the extremes are horrible! Fain would I ſtill ſave you!"

"Save me! (exclaimed Roſina, wildly) from what Merciful Heaven, what language is this? New to

my ears; piercing to my ſoul! Gradations in guilt; extremes in miſery! What miſery can ſurpaſs that which I feel at this moment! But to guilt I am, thank Heaven, a ſtranger."

"Roſina, will you then return with me to Ireland?" ſaid Fitzoſborne.

"What, (cried Roſina,) to be dragged thither like a culprit! loaded with aſperſion; on ſlight appearances ſentenced to ignominy; condemned without proof; calumniated; vilified! What have I done? Who are my accuſers? To Ireland! Inſtead of being welcomed with tender endearments, to be received with ſtern ſeverity, to liſten to harſh recrimination, inſtead of the effuſions of tenderneſs! Inſtead of partial commendation, to reproachful reviling! Oh, no, never! Sooner would I hide my head beneath a mountain. O, how it burns! Would to Heaven, it were there already!"

"I cannot leave her, (ſaid Fitzoſborne, ſtriving to diſengage himſelf from Hume;) I cannot deſert her in this dreadful agitation."

"You

"You may very ſafely, (returned Hume;) you leave her in good hands. I am ſure this gentleman has abundance of good-nature, and will do all in his power to ſooth and tranquillize her. I dare ſay he will ſtay here all night with her."

Fitzoſborne, ſtarting at a ſuggeſtion which had been artfully thrown in to excite his indignation, ruſhed out of the houſe, and flew towards their inn with ſuch rapidity, that Hume, finding it very inconvenient to move with equal velocity, ſlackened his pace, and followed him at his leiſure.

"Stay, (cried Roſina, as he left the room;) O, ſtay, Fitzoſborne! Forſake me not! Abandon me not to miſery! I will go with you! I will do any thing! O, return, Fitzoſborne! Leave me not in this cruel agitation!"

She would have flown out of the houſe in purſuit of him, had ſhe not been forcibly prevented by Lord Raymond.

"Why theſe frantic effuſions, (ſaid he,) theſe mean and unworthy conceſſions to a man who has thus recently inſulted and villified you? Whatever

ever obligations you might have formerly owed theſe Fitzoſbornes, the treatment you have this night received, has more than cancelled them. Act, then, with ſpirit, aſſert your independence, and throw off the yoke which this tyrannic family would impoſe on you."

"What yoke? Whom call you tyrannic? (ſaid Roſina, wildly.) O, my friend, my benefactreſs, why did I ever leave you! Yet you will ſtill receive me; ſtill, in defiance of calumny, credit my aſſertions of my innocence. Why are you here, my Lord? Go, leave me inſtantly. Would to Heaven I had never ſeen you! Go, and ſee me no more!"

"Cruel Roſina! (ſaid Lord Raymond;) recall that wiſh, revoke that interdiction. How have I merited this ſeverity? Is it thus you reward my tenderneſs and fidelity?"

"I know not what you have merited, (returned Roſina;) but juſt now, when ſolemnly adjured by Fitzoſborne to vindicate my innocence, if my ſenſes deceived me not, you evaded the required juſtification; you prevaricated!"

"Pre-

"Prevaricated? (returned Lord Raymond. I ſaid you were an angel, and, as an angel, innocent. Was that prevarication? Your recollection wanders, Roſina. When it returns, it will bear teſtimony to the truth of my aſſertion."

"May be ſo, (ſaid Roſina;) my recollection does indeed wander; but I ſtill retain enough to be conſcious of the impropriety of your continuing here. Pray leave me."

"Shall I then ſee you to-morrow morning?"

"For a moment, perhaps, juſt to bid you adieu."

"Adieu, Roſina?"

"Yes; my reſolution is fixed; and your efforts to ſhake it will be fruitleſs. I will accompany Fitzoſborne to Ireland. Through a weak and arrogant reliance on my own judgment, I have erred; too late I ſee and feel it! I was unfit to be truſted with the guidance of my own conduct. What then remains for me, but to return to my friend, acknowledge my fault, throw myſelf on her com-

compaſſion, and promiſe, for the future, an implicit obedience to her wiſhes?"

"This ſtrange determination (ſaid Lord Raymond) will appear to you on reflection ——"

"Spare your objections, (interrupted Roſina;) they will be of no avail. Gratitude, reaſon, and conſcience concur in pointing out to me the path I ought to tread."

"Yet, for my ſake, Roſina, ——"

"For your ſake, my Lord! And what are you, that require of me the ſacrifice of thoſe ſacred principles! You, to whom but two months ſince I was a ſtranger! Would to Heaven, I had ſtill continued ſo! You, on whoſe account my reputation has been wounded; and my heart at this moment throbs with anguiſh! That I have been partial to you, I deny not; ſuch denial would be vain. But, can you ſuppoſe me to be ſo weak and worthleſs, ſo diveſted of principle, ſo loſt to gratitude, as to ſuffer a frivolous partiality to riſe in competition with every reſpectable duty, and alienate my affection from the protectreſs of my infancy!"

Auſtin, who had viewed with amaze the tranſactions of the evening, and who ſtill continued in his corner, as if rivetted there by ſilent aſtoniſhment, now ſlowly advanced towards Roſina, and dropping on his knees beſide her, preſſed her hands to his lips, and wetted them with his tears. Roſina caught the infection; ſhe leaned on his ſhoulder, and her tears flowed abundantly."

"Auſtin, (ſaid ſhe,) ariſe early in the morning, ſeek Fitzoſborne, bid him return to me, tell him he will find me prepared to comply with all his wiſhes."

"So then, (ſaid Lord Raymond, with unaffected vexation,) you have reſolved to abandon me."

"Not to abandon *you*, my Lord, but to adhere to my duty, to retrieve, if poſſible, the errors I have committed, and recover the eſteem I have forfeited.—Auſtin, you muſt be early."

"Aye, that I will, (ſaid Auſtin.) Thank God! thank God! Pleaſe the pigs, I'll be with him before cock-crow!"

Lord

Lord Raymond would ſtill have diſſuaded Roſina from her purpoſe by argument and importunity; but finding her inflexible in her determination, he at length obeyed her repeated commands, and left the houſe, almoſt deſpairing of the accompliſhment of a plan which, but a few hours before, he had regarded almoſt with certainty of ſucceſs. In the rancour of diſappointment, and in the rage of rivalry, he returned home, determined to ſend a challenge to Fitzoſborne. But his prudence ſoon ſuggeſted to him all the inconvenience to which ſuch a meaſure might ſubject him: and, though humanity and equity might have pleaded in vain, the reſentment which dictated this mode of vengeance was eaſily ſubdued by apprehenſion for his own perſonal ſafety. Many plans were formed by him for the detention of Roſina, and rejected as impracticable, in the courſe of that ſleepleſs night. An unexpected incident, however, reanimated his hopes, when they ſeemed moſt in danger of total extinction.

## CHAP. II.

### AN EDIFYING EPISTLE.

IT is unneceſſary to ſay that Roſina paſſed a night as ſleepleſs, and infinitely more wretched. She aroſe with the dawn; and as ſoon as ſhe imagined the people of the inn were riſen, ſhe diſpatched Auſtin to Fitzoſborne. He returned to her in leſs than an hour; and the length of his countenance proclaimed the bad tidings he brought: Fitzoſborne and his company had departed before day break in the morning. He produced a letter which had been left for her; ſhe eagerly tore the ſeal, and read as follows:

HOWEVER hopeleſs to myſelf, and irkſome to you, may be the office, I cannot leave the kingdom without writing to you. As the delegate of my

my mother, my words may ſtill be heard with reſpect; for the native feelings of your boſom cannot yet be totally eradicated, nor the obligations of gratitude entirely cancelled. Fallen, tho' you are, from the glorious elevation of virtue, yet as the lapſe has been recent, the aſcent may be regained. O, beware of that fatal error which teaches your ſex to believe there is no medium in depravity. Sweet are the encouragements, and bright are the rewards, which Heaven holds out to the returning penitent. Angels ſhall rejoice at your return to virtue: hereafter they ſhall receive you to their holy ſociety; and ſhall the vain arrogance of human creatures preſumptuouſly baniſh you from their's! Whom God refuſes not to pardon, ſhall men dare to condemn! Return, then, Roſina, to your friends and to yourſelf, to the dignity of innocence, and to the duties of humanity! Fear no recrimination, no harſh invectives. I promiſe you, on the part of my mother, a reception as indulgent as if you had never erred. Learn to diſdain the illiberal prejudices of a misjudging world. A thouſand virtues are ſtill your own. Nothing created is perfect: the diamond has flaws; nay, even the ſun has ſpots. Ah, were it not for one blemiſh, you would be too bright for humanity.

But your tranſgreſſion, though venial in its nature, is fatal in its tendency. You totter on the verge of a deep and frightful gulph. O, reject not the offered hand that would lead you back to ſecurity and honour, to peace on earth, and the proſpect of immortal felicity.

Young, enamoured, beloved, enſnared in the toils of a ſeducer, if your fortitude, ſuperior to your temptations, ſhould enable you to break your chain, what a triumph will ſtill be your's! Every remembrance of your deviation will be obliterated by the glory of ſuch a conqueſt.

Come; and if your lover retains one ſpark of honour, of tenderneſs, or humanity, he will purſue your ſteps; he will entreat the mediation of your friends, to reconcile you to yourſelf and to him: he will offer you his vows, and pledge them to you at the altar. Come, then, my ſiſter. This morning, yes, but this morning, I hoped to call you by a dearer, fonder name. Ah, could I have imagined that, 'ere night, I could have formed a wiſh to devote you to another!

HECTOR FITZOSBORNE.

Roſina

Roſina had ſcarcely peruſed this letter, which revived all her grief and indignation, when Lord Raymond appeared.

"What, (ſaid he, obſerving her violent emotion,) what ſtill in this perturbation! I hoped the repoſe of the night would have calmed the agitation of your ſpirits."

"Talk not of repoſe and calm, (ſaid Roſina;) they are loſt to me for ever! Read that letter."

"Inſulting young man! (ſaid Lord Raymond, when he had looked it over.) O, does contempt ever ſting the ſoul ſo deeply as when, in the ſemblance of compaſſion, it tears open our wounds, under pretence of pouring balm into them! Has this letter cured you of your folly, or do you ſtill adhere to your reſolution of returning to the houſe of bondage? Oh, with what keen exultation will old Fitzoſborne triumph in your diſgrace; with what induſtry of malice will he every where circulate the tale of your imaginary lapſe from virtue; with what opprobrious reviling will he greet you on your return!"

"Juſt Heaven! (ſaid Roſina, ſtung to the ſoul at the ſuppoſition,) muſt I then ſubmit to this degradation!"

"No, Roſina, you muſt not, you ſhall not ſubmit to it! Your heart is mine; but laſt night you ratified the gift. Dear as you are to my ſoul, ſhall I ſuffer you to be thus inſulted; thus led captive to grace the triumph of your enemy, when I can myſelf offer you an aſylum, would you but ſuffer me to guide you to happineſs."

"Happineſs! (repeated Roſina, who, ſtill unconſcious of the baſeneſs of her betrayer, imagined he alluded to a private union;) happineſs dwells with the pure of heart; the breaſt that is blackened by ingratitude can never be her reſidence. I will form no engagement that is not ſanctioned by the approbation of my benefactreſs. No, let Fitzoſborne triumph as he may, the minds of the good and candid will ſtill be open to conviction; their eyes are not wilfully ſhut againſt the light of truth; to their hearts it will ſtill force a paſſage. Yes, I will go."

"Then you deſert me for ever, Roſina!"

"And

"And why for ever? Does the narrow ſea I am to traverſe place an inſeparable barrier between us?"

"O, no; whole oceans would prove to me no barrier; but I dread the influence of theſe Fitzoſbornes; I dread your making ſuch a voyage, imaginary as the danger attendant on it may be, ——— I ſtart even at ſhadows. For thoſe who greatly love will greatly fear. But moſt of all do I ſhudder at the idea of being ſeparated from you. O, Roſina, were your breaſt inſpired with an equal paſſion, there is no ſacrifice which you would want fortitude to make to it."

"Degrade not (ſaid Roſina) an honourable virtue, by confounding it with a diſgraceful weakneſs. Shall I be accuſed of want of fortitude, when, ſpite of the ſofter bonds that would detain me, I exert reſolution to return to Ireland, to endure the ſcoffs of my enemies, and the no leſs humiliating compaſſion of my friends? Yet, I will go, though chains and dungeons would be preferable; for there I might hide my head from the taunts of deriſion. Racks and tortures! Merciful Heaven! can the inventive cruelty of man

contrive a torment equal to that of the wounded and agonized ſpirit?"

Roſina burſt as ſhe ſpoke into a violent paſſion of tears. Lord Raymond endeavoured to ſooth her; but he ſeemed to have loſt his influence. She appeared to be ſcarcely conſcious of his preſence; and he ſaw with extreme vexation, that the intereſt he had ſo aſſiduouſly endeavoured to eſtabliſh in her heart, was but ſecondary to that poſſeſſed by the Fitzoſbornes; or rather, that honour and gratitude predominated there with a ſway ſo triumphant, as to bid defiance to every attempt to ſubvert them. Surpriſed to find ſuch inflexible ſteadineſs of reſolution, united with ſo much gentleneſs of heart, and ſuch ſoftneſs of compliance, he began to regard his enterprize as almoſt impracticable; though he admired her too paſſionately to abandon it, whilſt there remained even the poſſibility of ſucceſs.

"If your determination is unalterably fixed, (ſaid he,) you would do well at leaſt to write to Mrs. Fitzoſborne previouſly to your return; from her anſwer, which you will probably receive in a few days, you may judge of the reception you are likely

likely to meet with: in the meantime, you will have leiſure to prepare for your departure."

"I believe (ſaid Roſina) I ought not to defer my journey."

"Whatever expedition you may poſſibly uſe, (returned Lord Raymond,) Fitzoſborne and his party will reach it before you. Will it not then be politic to endeavour to counteract the injurious tendency of the report they will not fail to make of your conduct. Beſides, is it too great an indulgence I require; too great a ſacrifice to a tenderneſs avowed and mutual, if, on my account alone, you ſhould defer your departure for a few ſhort days, which muſt be followed by months of uncertainty and anguiſh."

"I will, then, write inſtantly to Mrs. Fitzoſborne," ſaid Roſina.

"Do ſo, (returned Lord Raymond.) I muſt now leave you; my abſence from breakfaſt might excite ſuſpicion. Beſides, I was laſt night too much diſturbed and agitated to write to my father. I may now promiſe to comply with his wiſhes, at leaſt as far as they reſpect my return to

London; my motives for desiring to continue here will shortly be removed. Have your letter ready; I shall ride out after breakfast, and will call for it, and leave it with my own at the post-office."

The instant Lord Raymond departed, Rosina sat down to write to Mrs. Fitzosborne; and her letter, hasty, incoherent, and almost obliterated by the tears that streamed from her eyes whilst she wrote it, so ingenuously avowed her tenderness for Lord Raymond, at the same time that it disclaimed the guilt imputed to that partiality with such fervor of asseveration—such energy of truth, as would have carried instant conviction to the affectionate and candid bosom, to whose feelings it appealed; but when Lord Raymond received it from the hands of Rosina, nothing was farther from his intention, than that it should ever reach those of Mrs. Fitzosborne. The suppression of this letter he regarded as his last stake; and whilst he dispatched an epistle he had fabricated for the purpose of amusing his father, by his servant to the post, he turned into a wood, and dismounting from his horse, seated himself tranquilly under a tree, where he entertained himself with the perusal of Rosina's, and the innocent affection it avowed for himself, united with the lively picture of the distress in which that affection

ſection had involved her, which might have melted any other heart, ſerved but to render his more callous, and to inſpire him with a ſtill keener ardour in the chaſe of his deſtined prey.

## CHAP. III.

### A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW.

AND now to account to the reader for the unexpected appearance of Fitzoſborne and his companions at the cottage, it will be neceſſary to caſt a retroſpective view on the tranſactions which occurred ſubſequent to Roſina's departure from Ireland.

Roſina had ſcarcely quitted the houſe of Mrs. Fleming, as has been already related, when Mr. Nettleby, indefatigable in his vigilance, arrived at it. He was there informed, that ſhe had ſet out for Belle-vue; but very doubtful of the truth of

this intelligence, he determined to ſatisfy himſelf, with reſpect to its authenticity, by going thither without loſs of time; not in the leaſt doubting, but that his diligence in the detection of the ſiniſter views he attributed to Roſina, would lay Mr. Fitzoſborne under eternal obligation to him; ſo little was he acquainted with that gentleman's character. He ſtopped all the perſons he met on the road, to deſcribe to them the perſons of Roſina and Auſtin, and to enquire if they had been ſeen by any of them; but receiving anſwers in the negative, to all his interrogatories, by the time he arrived at Bellevue, he was pretty well convinced that Roſina had taken another road; and the report of the ſervants there, confirmed his ſuſpicions. As ſoon as he alighted, he ruſhed into the drawing-room, where he found Mr. and Mrs. Fitzoſborne, Lady Bell Beauchamp and Mr. Hume.

"So, (cried he) here's a fine piece of work you have made of it! bleſſed contrivers you are altogether, to let that girl ſlip through your fingers."

"What girl, (ſaid Mr. Fitzoſborne, whilſt the the reſt of the company gazed at the old gentleman in ſilent amazement) who do you mean?"

"Who

"Who do I mean? why who ſhould I mean but Roſina Mortimer; don't you know that ſhe has eloped from you all—gone off this morning the devil knows where, and the devil knows with whom."

"I did not know that the old gentleman was ſo intimately acquainted with Roſina's proceedings," ſaid Mrs. Fitzoſborne, who paid not the leaſt attention to Mr. Nettleby's report.

"It's a fine time for jeſting, (cried Nettleby) I wiſh I had taken the matter ſo eaſily! I have had my own ſhare of trouble about her. I had ſcarcely time to ſwallow a morſel ſince yeſterday morning. I could not reſt all night thinking of her."

"Well, ſir, (ſaid Lady Bell) and what more likely to keep a lover w king than the idea of his miſtreſs."

"You are enough to ſet one mad! I tell you the girl has gone off—eloped—run away with ſome fellow or other! A fine thing to let ſuch a noble property as ſhe is entitled to, ſlip through our fingers—that's all that vexes me! and if you (to Mr. Hume) had not been a good for nothing ſilly

indolent blockhead, you might have ſecured both her and it, before this time."

"Faith, ſir, (ſaid Mr. Hume) if the lady has ſuch a ſtrong deſire for elopement, I think I am as well without either."

"You talk like an ignorant conceited puppy as you are, (replied Nettleby) if ſhe could elope, the eſtate could not; and it would have been your own fault if you had let her, when you might ſo eaſily have prevented her, by keeping her always under lock and key."

"A moſt notable receipt for managing a refractory help-mate! (ſaid Lady Bell, laughing) but pray good ſir, will you be ſo kind as to inform us, on what ſuſpicious circumſtances you have fabricated this wonderful intelligence."

Mr. Nettleby then proceeded to inform the company of the adventures of the preceding day; and his conduct, even from his own relation, appeared ſo unaccountably whimſical, and his ſuppoſition of Roſina's intended elopement ſo entirely chimerical, that he found, to his extreme chagrin, that he could not infuſe his ſuſpicions into the mind of any perſon

ſon preſent, except that of Mr. Fitzoſborne, who remarked, that Roſina's going to the houſe of a mantua-maker, with an intention of continuing there all night, inſtead of driving directly to that of the lady, to whom her viſit was intended, had undoubtedly a very odd appearance; eſpecially when corroborated by the circumſtance of her being found at night in the company of a ſtrange gentleman.

Mrs. Fitzoſborne replied with warmth, that theſe circumſtances, though a little ſingular, ſupplied no ground for cenſure or ſuſpicion; that Roſina had often accompanied her to the houſe of Mrs. Fleming; and that once, when they had gone unexpectedly to town, their own houſe not being prepared for their reception, they had ſlept there ſeveral nights; and that notwithſtanding the aſperſions Mr. Nettleby had cauſeleſsly thrown on her character, Mrs. Fleming was a woman highly reſpected in her line of buſineſs."

"I think (ſaid Lady Bell) all the evidence that appears againſt Roſina, may be ſummed up in her having ſpent yeſterday in the houſe of Mrs. Fleming, inſtead of that of Lady Franklin; and if reputation was ſo fragile a bauble as to be cracked or

ſlawed by ſo frivolous a circumſtance, it would be ſcarcely worth the pains of preſerving."

"Even that circumſtance may be eaſily accounted for, (rejoined Mrs. Fitzoſborne) by ſuppoſing Lady Franklin was out of town when Roſina went to her houſe, which, as her viſit was unexpected, was very probably the caſe.

Mr. Hume very readily agreed to the probability of this ſuppoſition, whilſt Mr. Fitzoſborne ſtood neuter, and Mr. Nettleby entered his proteſt againſt it.

"I never (cried he) ſince I have been the unfortunate inhabitant of this world of perverſity and wickedneſs, I never yet met with ſuch a ſet of unbelieving trojans! I am propheſying, and propheſying, but, like poor Caſſandra, it is my fate to propheſy to a ſet of infidels, who pay no more attention to my word than if I was a maniac! And pray madam (to Lady Bell) you that are ſo expert at throwing lights on dark cauſes, how can you account for your client's diſappearance this morning, and explain the enigma of the falſe account ſhe left of the place of her deſtination."

"Nothing

"Nothing more eaſy, (replied Lady Bell) you know it is a common form to ſay we are leaving town, when we don't chuſe to be troubled with diſagreeable viſitors. I dare ſay Roſina was repoſing herſelf very comfortably in her bed this morning, when ſhe ſent you off on this wrong ſcent."

But though Mr. Nettleby could make no converts to his opinion of Roſina's flight, he adhered to it not the leſs obſtinately on that account.

## CHAP. IV.

### THE LAWYER IN THE RIGHT.

THOUGH Mrs. Fitzoſborne had at firſt utterly diſregarded Mr. Nettleby's report of Roſina's elopement, ſhe yet found, when ſhe had leiſure for reflection, that an uneaſy apprehenſion dwelt upon her mind. That Roſina had gone to Mrs. Fleming's immediately on her arrival in town, appeared

appeared very ſingular. She recollected her deep melancholy, and the extreme regret ſhe had manifeſted at their ſeparation, a regret, which at the moment ſurpriſed her, and which ſhe now recollected with increaſed uneaſineſs. Too well aſſured, however, of the purity of Roſina's heart, to dread even for an inſtant, her having been ſeduced from her duty by any unworthy attachment, and too wiſe to be

——— "over exquiſite
"To caſt the faſhion of uncertain evils;"

ſhe endeavoured to ſtifle the anxiety ſhe could not entirely diſſipate. She however immediately wrote to Roſina an account of Nettleby's expedition to Belle-vue; and with her accuſtomed gentleneſs of ſtyle, required an explanation of what appeared myſterious in her conduct. She diſpatched this letter by a truſty ſervant, with directions to bring her an immediate anſwer; and then reſolved to await with patience the reſult of her enquiries. But the poſt fore-run her meſſenger, and the next morning as ſhe ſat at breakfaſt with the gentlemen, ſhe received the letter which Roſina had written to her the night before her departure.

"This

"This letter, sir (said she to Mr. Nettleby, who had been too much fatigued to return to town on the preceding day) this letter, said she, as she broke the seal with joyful expectation, comes in good time to clear Rosina's conduct from the imputations you have thrown on it."

"Not so easily done (replied the old gentleman) it would be a fine thing if people were to be believed on their own testimony. If that was the case, the judges would have nothing to do but to acquit. The law obliges no man to condemn himself; few culprits plead guilty, and it is not to be supposed that she will deviate from a custom established from time immemorial; but impartial investigation is the province of justice. I should be glad however, to hear what the creature can possibly urge in her own vindication."

Mrs. Fitzosborne, mean-time, had opened Rosina's letter, and her perturbation and horror increased with every line she read.

"Merciful heaven! (she exclaimed aloud, when she came to that passage) I have left your house to return to it no more." "Is she then gone—and to return no more! Now, sir (turning with indigna-

tion to Mr. Fitzoſborne) are you at length ſatisfied, now that you have accompliſhed your favorite purpoſe, and driven from beneath your roof the orphan conſigned to your humanity. O my ſweet fugitive—my poor perſecuted Roſina! lovely noble minded creature! where art thou at this moment! But I will diſcover thy retreat—what caution can elude the vigilance of my tenderneſs!"

"Then it ſeems I was right enough after all; (ſaid Nettleby) I proteſt I am very glad it has happened ſo, that it may teach you the knowledge of your own ſhort-ſighted folly. Aye, aye, perverſe and refractory as you are, you may yet learn to revere the councils of age and experience! but what can ſhe alledge in her own defence?"

"There (ſaid Mrs. Fitzoſborne) there the motives of her conduct are explained, and where is the callous heart that ſhall condemn them!"

She threw the letter on the table, and whilſt the gentlemen peruſed it alternately, ſhe ordered the travelling chaiſe to be inſtantly got ready, and retired to prepare for immediately ſetting off in purſuit of Roſina.

"I never

"I never read ſuch out of the way ſtuff in my days (ſaid Nettleby, when he had finiſhed the letter) there's nothing concluſive in it—nothing to the point—one can't tell all the time what it is that ſhe is driving at—it's all flummery."

"Except what ſhe ſays of yourſelf (ſaid Mr. Fitzoſborne) I hope you find the honourable mention ſhe makes of you, ſufficiently concluſive."

"I wonder (cried Nettleby) where ſhe got the impudence to mention me in ſuch an opprobrious manner! and this is the creature, whom but a few weeks ſince, I had a notion of taking to wife! Never, no never can I be ſufficiently thankful for my almoſt miraculous preſervation; what a bleſſing that the young imp ſhewed her cloven foot ſo ſoon!"

Mr. Hume, who was really concerned at an event which diſſipated all his hopes, offered to eſcort Mrs. Fitzoſborne on her journey, and to aſſiſt her in her purſuit of Roſina, but ſhe declined his attendance, and in her way ſtopped at Lady Bell Beauchamp's, who, on being informed of the ſubject of her viſible diſtreſs, immediately agreed to accompany her to town. Mrs. Fitzoſborne was

now

now too late become ſenſible of the error ſhe had committed, in refuſing to conſent to Roſina's removal from her family, and her affliction was aggravated by the bitterneſs of ſelf-accuſation.

On their arrival in town, they proceeded directly to Mrs. Fleming, from whoſe account of Roſina, they received very little ſatisfaction. After much trouble and many enquiries, the coachman, who had driven her to the end of the ſouth-wall, was diſcovered and examined; but that a boat had taken her and Auſtin to a large ſhip which lay at a conſiderable diſtance in the river, was all the information he could give. Thus the painful certainty that Roſina had left the kingdom, was all the ſatisfaction that Mrs. Fitzoſborne was likely to derive from her reſearches. From the coachman's deſcription of the veſſel, ſhe knew it could not belong to Holyhead, but it might poſſibly have been a Liverpool or Parkgate packet. Enquiries were therefore made at the packet-houſes, where the people, on hearing Auſtin's figure deſcribed, perfectly recollected his having been there, but aſſured Mrs. Fitzoſborne, that he had not engaged a paſſage in any of them.

Convinced

Convinced at length of the hopeleſsneſs of her purſuit, after continuing a week in Dublin with Lady Bell, ſhe reluctantly quitted it, and returned to the country. She determined to defer any further enquiries 'till the return of her ſon, whom ſhe expected in a fortnight. She knew Roſina would write to her, and ſhe hoped that from the poſt-mark of her letter, might throw ſome light upon the place of her retreat; but in this expectation ſhe was diſappointed, for as Roſina's letters were always encloſed by Auſtin to Solomon, and by him put into the General Poſt-Office in Dublin, the poſſibility of a diſcovery by ſuch means was precluded by this caution. Two days after her return to the country, ſhe received Roſina's firſt letter, written from Briſtol; but greatly as ſhe rejoiced to receive from her own hand the aſſurance of her health and ſafety, ſhe was much diſappointed to find that it gave her not the leaſt inſight in reſpect to the place of her concealment. One circumſtance, however, it revealed to her; Roſina muſt have a confident in Dublin, to whom her letter had been encloſed, and by whom it had been put into the Poſt-Office. From her intimacy with Miſs Marſden, that young lady incurred her ſuſpicions, but her firſt conference with her on the ſubject, entirely diſſipated them. The artleſſneſs of Miſs Marſden's aſſurances,

ces, her evident ſurpriſe and affliction at the departure of her young friend, not unmixed with reſentment at having been deemed unworthy to ſhare her confidence, and her declaration that ſhe might have eaſily been perſuaded to have been the companion of her flight, had ſuch a meaſure been propoſed to her, entirely convinced Mrs. Fitzoſborne of her ſincerity. Every perſon who could be ſuſpected of having been privy to Roſina's elopement, underwent ſtrict examination. The connexions of Auſtin were next brought on the tapis, but the reſult of every inveſtigation proved equally unſatisfactory. Still, however, by occupying attention, and cheriſhing hope, they prevented Mrs. Fitzoſborne's ſpirits from ſinking into total ſtagnation, and in the letters ſhe conſtantly received from Roſina, ſhe found the moſt reviving cordials.

Mr. Fitzoſborne, meantime, though he forbore to irritate her reſentment, and inſult her diſtreſs by an open triumph, rejoiced in his inmoſt ſoul at the departure of Roſina, and exulted in the conſciouſneſs, that the unworthy treatment he had given her, had driven her to embrace ſo deſperate a meaſure. He now wiſhed for the return of his ſon as anxiouſly as he had heretofore dreaded it; and ſince the principal bar to his wiſhes ſeemed removed, no lon-

ger

ger doubted the accompliſhment of his favourite deſign, that of effecting a union between him and Lady Flora. As a ſtep preparatory to this event, he gave her Ladyſhip an invitation to Belle-vue, which, always weary of herſelf, and glad to ſnatch at any proſpect of relieving and diverſifying the intolerable inſipidity of her exiſtence, ſhe gladly complied with. She reached Belle-vue, attended by her favorite and prime miniſter, Mrs. Flaherty, two days before the return of Hector Fitzoſborne. Mr. Fitzoſborne conſigned her to the care of his lady, who was glad to keep Mr. Hume to ſhare the burden of ſo heavy a ſociety, and ſent alſo for Miſs Marſden to aſſiſt her in the arduous taſk of finding entertainment for Lady Flora.

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

### THE RETURN OF YOUNG FITZOSBORNE.

Though four long years a night of abſence prove,
Yet hope's ſoft ſtar ſhone trembling on his love.

SEWARD.

YOUNG as Hector Fitzoſborne was when he left Ireland, four years of abſence had not obliterated the impreſſion of Roſina, which he had borne away with him; and his imagination, though often ſtrongly charmed with the novel ſcene exhibited to it, ſtill returned to its favourite object with enamoured tenderneſs, and ever new delight. Many ſnares had been ſpread for his youth; but though he had ſometimes been led by the prevalence of example, and the earneſtneſs of ſolicitation, to partake

partake of amuſements he condemned and deſpiſed, his unbiaſſed judgment, and his unperverted principles, awoke his ſenſes from the tranſient intoxication; for his ingenuous boſom had not been inſtructed in the ſchool of faſhionable life, to connect the idea of happineſs with the conſciouſneſs of depravity. What climate did he traverſe—what city did he enter, that preſented not to his obſervation, inſtances of the fatal conſequences of licentious indulgence, no leſs numerous than melancholy; wretched victims of ſelf-earned miſery, and mortifying mementos of human degradation. The lights which he borrowed from the experience of others, ſhone around him, like beacons, to warn him to ſhun the rocks on which the peace and honour of thouſands had been ſhip-wrecked; and ſenſual pleaſure aroſe to his imagination as an enchantreſs, who mingles a mortal venom in her nectared bowl—who bears an empoiſoned dagger in her boſom, to ſtab the victim ſhe embraces. Hector Fitzoſborne admired women, but he revered them alſo: the diſſipated and frivolous amongſt them he ſometimes deſpiſed, and ſometimes pitied: for thoſe who had erred from weakneſs, the amiable candor of his nature could make many allowances; but the habitually unprincipled, the incorrigibly vicious, were the object of his ſupreme diſguſt and deteſtation.

He

He looked forward to a permanent union with a lovely woman, as to the higheſt bliſs this human ſcene can beſtow; but in his ſcheme of felicity, love was ſecondary to eſteem. Paſſion, he knew, like beauty it's favorite object, was tranſient; and that the laſting affection of the heart requires to be held by bonds leſs ſubject to decay. A ſimilarity of taſte, a uniſon of ſoul, a mind enlightened by knowledge, and a heart enamoured of virtue.

Such were the charms with which the imagination of Fitzoſborne arrayed the deſtined partner of his heart; and of ſuch charms the lovely and engaging childhood of Roſina had given the faireſt promiſe. All his hopes of future happineſs entwined themſelves around her idea, and every circumſtance concurred to heighten the fond alluſion; his mother's letters filled with encomiums, purpoſely and profuſely laviſhed on her young favorite, conſpired with thoſe which he frequently received from herſelf, to increaſe his pre-poſſeſſion; for Mrs. Fitzoſborne had encouraged her to correſpond with him in French and Italian, and her letters diſplayed the ſuperiority of her capacity, and the brilliancy of her imagination.

Though

Though his reſidence abroad afforded him abundant opportunities of inſtruction and amuſement, the dread of being rivalled in the affection of Roſina during his abſence, rendered it irkſome to him, and was the ſource of his ardent and repeated ſolicitations, for permiſſion to return.

In his journey he purſued the uſual route; he reſted but one day in London, and travelled from thence to Dublin by the way of Holyhead. He found his father awaiting his arrival, and as it was morning when he landed, they immediately ſet out for Belle-vue. As he knew that his father had formerly obſerved his partiality for Roſina with diſapprobation and diſpleaſure, he forbore to mention her on the way, and he entered the houſe in full expectation of finding her there to receive him.

His arrival was a ſurpriſe to Mrs. Fitzoſborne, who did not expect that the winds and waves would have conſpired with the rapidity of his motions, to render his journey ſo very expeditious. Lady Flora, Lady Bell, Mr. Neville, a gentleman who was there on a viſit to the latter, Miſs Marſdon, Mr. Nettleby and Mr. Hume, were with Mrs. Fitzoſborne in the drawing-room, awaiting a ſummons to dinner,

when the travellers arrived. As ſoon as young Fitzoſborne had received the congratulations of his mother, he caſt his eyes earneſtly around him, in ſearch of Roſina, and took the firſt opportunity of approaching Mrs. Fitzoſborne, and enquiring in a whiſper for her young ward. Her eyes filled with tears at the queſtion—ſhe anſwered with an air of emotion, that ſhe was well.

"Is ſhe not here!" ſaid he.

"She is not, (replied Mrs. Fitzoſborne) but for the preſent ſuſpend your curioſity."

Diſappointed—agitated—not knowing what to believe, or what to fear; terrified at his mother's viſible diſtreſs at his interrogatory, and evaſion of the ſubject it led to, he dreaded that Roſina's abſence was the conſequence of her having formed a clandeſtine union. Confuſed and bewildered, he returned anſwers to the queſtions the company were eager to addreſs to him, ſo little pertinent to their ſubjects, that he became conſcious of his apparent ſtupidity, and was obliged to attribute his wandering and inattention to the fatigue of his journey: the ſame excuſe ſerved for his want of appetite at dinner, and his abſence and thoughtfulneſs after it.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VI.

### SINGULAR REFLECTIONS ON TRAVELLERS AND TRAVEL.

MR. Fitzoſborne oft regarded his ſon with uneaſineſs and ſurpriſe: during their journey from town he had been in remarkably high ſpirits, and his preſent wandering and inattention, appeared rather to reſult from the agitation of uneaſy reflection, than from the langour of extreme fatigue. He recollected his boyiſh partiality for Roſina, and was more than half inclined to attribute this change of humour to its true cauſe.

"I think, Hector, (ſaid he, with an air of chagrin) inſtead of having imported an additional ſtock of ſpirit and vivacity from the continent, you ſeem

to have left behind you the portion of thoſe qualities with which you were endowed by nature."

"You have formed a premature judgment, ſir, (ſaid Hector Fitzoſborne, ſmiling) you muſt conſider my luggage is ſtill on ſhip-board; grant me but leiſure to exhibit my importations, and I hope you will have reaſon to acknowledge that my travels have procured me ſome advantages."

"That's more than moſt young men that go a travelling now a-days, have to ſay for themſelves, (cried Nettleby) and it is highly unreaſonable to rebuke the youth for the practice of ſo commendable a virtue as ſilence."

"Silence! (exclaimed Mr. Hume) ſilence is the virtue of an owl—the fag and refuſe of all good qualities!

——— "Silence is only commendable
"In a dried neat's tongue, or a maid not vendible!"

"But, my dear ſir, ſince you ſo greatly admire this grace of ſilence, I wonder you don't illuſtrate it by your practice. No one, I think, engroſſes ſo

ſo large a proportion of the converſation as yourſelf."

"Becauſe, Mr. Malapert, there are ſeaſons for all things. There is a time to ſpeak, and a time to liſten: youth is the ſeaſon for attention; men ſhould hoard up wiſdom in their young days for their own advantage, and diſſeminate it in their age for that of their fellow creatures."

"Aye, (ſaid Hume) that age is the ſeaſon of garulity, we all know to our coſt. Now, indeed, I acknowledge that you illuſtrate your poſition."

"The ſcripture warns us (returned Nettleby) againſt lighting our candle to ſet it under a buſhel; but men ſhould be well ſupplied with the unction of wiſdom and experience, before they preſume to illuminate others; elſe, though their lamps may glare and dazzle for a little interval, they will ſhortly be extinguiſhed in ſtench and darkneſs."

"So much the better, (cried Hume) for of all peſts of ſociety, ſurely thoſe are the greateſt, who run about the world, thruſting their pretended lights into the faces of every one they meet, and with a fiery ſpirit of perſecution, ſinging the whiſ-

kers of all thoſe whom they cannot oblige to ſubſcribe to their own ridiculous tenets; holding, as the poet ſays, *their farthing candle to the ſun*; exhauſting the patience of their hearers with tedious elucidations of ſelf-evident propoſitions, and diſturbing the quiet of ſociety with inveterate controverſy, on points the moſt ridiculouſly inſignificant."

"What ſilly, inconſequent, eccentric declamation is here! (cried Nettleby) but this is one of the tricks of your modern eloquence, to confound, where you are inadequate to the taſk of conviction, and miſlead the attention from the point you want capacity to hit. Scourge me ſuch orators! Might not I have liberty to commend the ſilence of this youth, without your taking up the cudgels in defence of that loquacity to which the young people of the preſent age are ſo ſhameleſsly addicted. But I hope, young man (to Hector Fitzoſborne) you will regard the behaviour of this my hopeful nephew, rather as a *warning than a pattern*; and ſtill continue to perſevere in that laudable taciturnity which, as I will ſuppoſe it proceeds from a modeſt conſciouſneſs of your own comparative ignorance, and a juſt reſpect for thoſe who are ſo greatly your ſeniors, is eminently laudable in this age of vanity and preſumption."

Hector

Hector Fitzoſborne bowed and ſmiled at this compliment.

"At leaſt, (ſaid Mr. Fitzoſborne) I hope you will allow Hector to entertain us with the hiſtory of his travels."

"His travels, (cried Nettleby) why what are his travels more than the travels of other people. If I feel any inclination to regale myſelf with tales of that nature, I can have recourſe to books, which at leaſt poſſeſs this advantage, that you may throw them aſide when you grow weary of them, which, as the authors of them are frequently ſuch confounded puppies and egotiſts, one is very apt to do. What can this young man have ſeen or known, that has not been ſeen and known by others, who, in all probability, were better calculated, both by capacity and experience, to give pleaſing and authentic accounts of the matters which have fallen under their obſervation. No, no; no tales of voyages and travels by ſea and land for me—for of all the numerous tribes of vermin which infeſt what is called faſhionable ſociety, your travelled coxcombs are the moſt inſufferable."

"Then I ſuppoſe, ſir, (ſaid Lady Bell) if you had a ſon, you would not ſend him to make the grand tour?"

"Not I truly; I ſee no great advantage that can be derived from running from one country to another, gaping at churches, bridges and pictures; gazing at the disjointed fragments of old tattered ſtatues, and poring over ruſty medals, and old cracked pipkins, dignified with the title of antique vaſes. They learn, indeed, a deal of ſelf-ſufficient prate, but when a ſet of theſe travelled geniuſſes meet together, it beggars all deſcription! magpyes, parrots and jackdaws, ſupply but faint emblems of the impertinence of their loquacity; they ſeem to think, forſooth, that becauſe they have ſeen more than others, they have an excluſive right to the converſation, and utter their fopperies with ſuch airs of gravity and ſolemnity,

"As who ſhould ſay—I am ſir oracle,
"And when I ope my mouth let no dog bark!"

"Then from the jargon they run on with, a compound of French, Engliſh, Spaniſh and Italian, one would think they had learned the confuſion of tongues that prevailed at the building of the tower of

of Babel. What the plague imports it to me, whether a mouldy ruſt eaten medal was ſtruck in the reign of Julius, or of Auguſtus Ceſar; or whether an old mutilated devil of a ſtatue was intended, by the carver of it, to repreſent Venus or Minerva, that I ſhould be bored with a diſſertation on it for three hours at a time. Yet ſuch are the points on which you will hear theſe fellows argue, with as much obſtinacy and pertinacity, as if they were engaged in the diſcuſſion of ſome conſequential points of law, or capital article of their creed, on which the ſalvation of their ſouls depended—nay more—for to get rid of their prejudices, as they call them, they to a man imbibe that irreligious ſpirit, which they dignify with the pompous appellation of philoſophic toleration. Though to liſten to their rhapſodies, one would imagine they were all idolaters, and worſhippers of graven images: with ſuch rapture and enthuſiaſm will you hear them extol the marble repreſentatives of a ſet of fabulous beings, who if they had ever exiſted, and that there was any truth in the ſtories that are told of them, would have deſerved to have been hanged, drawn and quartered, every god and goddeſs of them. One puppy will tell you a ſtory four hours long, about his Diana, and all the perils and dangers he encountered in getting her ſafely landed on the Bri-

tiſh ſhore, and releaſed from the harpy claws of the Cuſtom-Houſe officers. Another coxcomb will entertain you with a tedious narration of the martyrdom he ſuffered whilſt his Venus was out at ſea in a ſtorm; and how the agitation of his ſpirits threw him into ſuch a raging fever, that his life was deſpaired of for fifteen days at the leaſt. Which amongſt them, I wonder, would ſhew half the anxiety about the life of a ſiſter, wife or daughter, which they manifeſt for the preſervation of theſe heathen trulls. This unaccountable *mania* ſeems to confer credibility on the moſt whimſical rhapſodies of the ancient poets, and Pygmalian's paſſion for a ſtatue, no longer appears ſingular. For my own part, I ſo utterly abhor and abominate every ſpecies of idolatry, that I would willingly exterminate every veſtige of it that remains on the face of the globe; and I think it would be an eſpecial comfort to the true believer, and a notable advancement to the intereſts of Chriſtianity, were every remnant of ſuperſtitious idolatry, under whatever various forms it may be exhibited, of temples, altars, pictures, ſtatues, &c. &c. to be collected into one grand maſs, and ſet on fire in the face of the world: it would be the funeral pile of expiring idolatry, and a glorious burnt offering on the altar of the true religion."

« O worſe than Gothic barbarity, (exclaimed Mr. Hume) what a horrible project have we here! and would even the ſtatue that enchants the world, claim no diſtinction from this univerſal devaſtation!"

« No truly, ſhe ſhould go to pot with the reſt of her relations. Were it poſſible to accompliſh a project of this nature, what bleſſed effects ſhould we ſhortly derive from it. Our young men no longer allured to the continent by a paſſion for theſe gewgaws, would content themſelves quietly at home, and inſtead of burying their fortunes in a foreign grave, apply their attention to the cultivation of their eſtates, and the encouragement of their tenantry. But in this age, every principle of rational economy is ſwept away by the inundation of follies which firſt ruſhed in upon us from the continent, and which has overſpread theſe our iſlands with a progreſs no leſs rapid than deſtructive. In other countries, that luxury which ſaps the foundation of the moſt flouriſhing empires, is the offspring of national proſperity, and introduced by the influx of riches; but in this bleſſed kingdom of ours, it has fore run the wealth and proſperity which it naturally follows, and will as effectually prevent their entrance amongſt us, as if

our coaſts were guarded with hydras, chimeras, and enchanted dragons. For wealth will only ſhower her golden favours in the laps of induſtry and economy; and the hideous forms of rapine, oppreſſion, and their attendant, famine, ſtalking with haſty ſtrides over a half depopulated country, will deter proſperity from ever alighting on our iſland. As ſhe haſtily paſſes over it, with indignant regret ſhe will view in its pompous palaces the magnificent monuments of corruption and depravity, the proud, but melancholy ſepulchres of national virtue. She will paſs over it, and wing her flight to the weſt, where liberty invites her reſidence, and where induſtry ſolicits her favours."

"If her ladyſhip will but drop a few partial purſes into my pocket as ſhe flies over my head, (ſaid Mr. Hume) ſhe may even go where ſhe pleaſes. There is nothing ſo weak as to perplex ourſelves about the poſſible calamities which yet ſleep quietly in the womb of time; and imagination cannot apply her obſtetrick powers to worſe purpoſe, than that of calling forth the embryo monſters into a premature exiſtence."

CHAP.

## CHAP. VII.

### A PORTRAIT.

Bleſt be the pencil! whoſe conſoling power,
Soothing ſoft friendſhip in her penſive hour;
Diſpells the cloud with melancholy fraught,
That abſence throws upon her tender thought.

HAYLEY.

HECTOR Fitzoſborne had paid little attention to Nettleby's harangue, and even the peculiarity of his ſentiments, which at another period would have excited his curioſity, now failed to intereſt it. When ſummoned to join the ladies at tea, young Fitzoſborne had ſcarcely entered the drawing-room, when his attention was attracted by a picture with which it had been furniſhed during his abſence. The preceding Chriſtmas Mr. Fitzoſborne

oſborne had entertained a large company at Bellevue, and amongſt other plans which had been projected for their amuſement, a few private plays were performed in a little theatre prepared for the purpoſe. Roſina was ſometimes prevailed on to take a part in theſe performances; and though her diffidence prevented her from undertaking any capital characters, the manner in which ſhe acquitted herſelf in the few ſhe could be perſuaded to attempt, convinced every ſpectator, that timidity alone prevented her from attaining to excellence, even in the moſt difficult. Mr. Fitzoſborne, with a great fondneſs for theatrical exhibitions, was himſelf poſſeſſed of very conſiderable talents for the ſtage: he was allowed to excell in the part of Comus; that maſque was got up, and Roſina was, with difficulty, perſuaded to undertake the character of the lady. She could ſcarcely fail of ſucceeding, in a part ſo congenial with her feelings, and for which her youth, her innocence and beauty, ſo peculiarly adapted her. At firſt her performance was rather languid, but in her controverſy with the enchanter, her genius burſt out in all its energy and luſtre, for the ſentiments ſhe uttered were ſo much her own, that they ſeemed to proceed from immediate inſpiration, and ſhe even herſelf appeared to forget that they were not the extemporary effuſions of her

own

own heart. The ſatisfaction ſhe gave was general and perfect; even Mr. Fitzoſborne forgot his perſonal antipathy in his admiration of theatrical excellence, and applauded with unaffected rapture.

At that period a very capital portrait painter arrived from Italy, and brought letters of recommendation from young Fitzoſborne to his father. Mrs. Fitzoſborne, ambitious of perpetuating the triumph of her favourite, expreſſed a deſire to have Mr. Fitzoſborne and Roſina drawn in one large piece, in the characters which both had performed with ſo great a ſhare of applauſe. Mr. Fitzoſborne did not oppoſe her inclinations, for, as a French writer obſerves, *"L'amour propre aime les portraits," and of l'amour propre no man exiſting poſſeſſed a larger proportion than Mr. Fitzoſborne. The piece was repreſented a ſecond time for the aſſiſtance of the artiſt, and encouraged by the applauſes her firſt attempt had procured her, Roſina's performance was more equal, and ſtill more ſpirited. She taught the painter to enter into the conceptions of the poet, and to do juſtice to his ſubject. He choſe to repreſent her in that moment, when, with all the energy of virtue, ſhe combats

* Self love is fond of portraits.

the

the alluring ſophiſtry of the enchanter: her figure ſeemed ready to ſtart from the canvaſs; the countenance beamed with divine radiance, and the attitude was ſo ſtrikingly expreſſive, that without any peculiar warmth of imagination, the ear of fancy might hear it utter theſe words.

—" Yet ſhould I try, the uncontrolled worth
" Of this pure cauſe would kindle my rapt ſpirits
" To ſuch a flame of ſacred vehemence,
" That dumb things would be mov'd to ſympathize,
" And the brute earth would lend her nerves, and ſhake,
" Till all thy magic ſtructures reared ſo high,
" Were ſhattered into heaps o'er thy falſe head."

The figure of the enchanter was not leſs capitally executed. His countenance expreſſed the agitation and diſmay that ſtruggled to conceal themſelves beneath an affected jollity. Mr. Fitzoſborne might eaſily have choſen a more pleaſing character; but, as " l'amour propre aime les portraits," it loves, alſo, to ſee them well dreſſed; and the white ſattin veſt and crimſon robe, embroidered with vine leaves, which uſually ornament the perſon of the enchanter, were particularly adapted to diſplay to advantage that ſymmetry of proportion on which Mr. Fitzoſborne valued himſelf, and with good reaſon, much more than on the expreſſion of his countenance.

countenance. Beſides, when the ſubſtance of virtue was ſo little the object of his devotion, it was not to be wondered at that he ſhould feel ſtill leſs veneration for its ſhadow.

## CHAP. VIII.

### THE PORTRAIT.

Bleſt be the pencil! whoſe enchantment gives
To wounded love the food on which he lives.

HAYLEY.

THE moment Hector Fitzoſborne entered the room, his attention was caught by this picture, and his cheek was fluſhed with emotion whilſt he gazed on it. It was Roſina, but how different from her whom he had parted from near five years before, and whoſe portrait, which he ſtill wore in his boſom, ſmiled with the ſoft ſimplicity of childhood. It was Roſina riſen to womanhood and perfection;

fection; the mein a happy compoſition of ſoftneſs, elegance and dignity, and the features irradiate with the intelligence of a ſuperior mind. He threw himſelf on a ſofa directly oppoſite to it, and gazed at the picture with ſenſations of delight and wonder, little inferior to thoſe with which he would have contemplated the original.

The piece was too ſtriking to eſcape the obſervation of any perſon to whom it was not familiar. Lady Bell's friend and viſitor, Mr. Neville, immediately diſtinguiſhed it from the other paintings which ornamented the room, and enquired, whether it was a fancy piece? Lady Belle replied, that it was the portrait of a young lady, a relation of Mrs. Fitzoſborne's.

"It was no wonder, however, (replied Mr. Neville) that I ſhould have found it difficult to believe that a form ſo perfectly lovely could have any exiſtence, except in the glowing imagination of a painter or a poet."

He then recognized Mr. Fitzoſborne in the figure of the enchanter, and after a few neceſſary compliments, returned to Roſina, and expatiated on her beauty and elegance with a fervor, not leſs gratifying

tifying to one half of the company, than it was diſguſting to the other. Lady Flora, who had long regarded the ſuperior attraction of Roſina with a jealous eye, could no longer reſtrain her ſtrong inclination to depreciate the object of her envy.

"That was a ſtrange ſtory, Mr. Nettleby, (ſaid ſhe) that I heard about you and Miſs Mortimer, and I am glad to have an opportunity of aſking you about it. It was confidently reported in town, that you detected her making an elopement with a gentleman, a married man: nay, it was even ſaid, that you took her out of the chaiſe from him, though ſhe afterwards contrived to give you the ſlip, and get off with him."

Young Fitzoſborne's face glowed like fire at this addreſs; he ſtarted from his ſeat, and went to the window.

"For ſhame! for ſhame, Lady Flora! (ſaid Mrs. Fitzoſborne, with great indignation) How can you thus wantonly ſtab the reputation of a perſon, who is herſelf too candid to credit evil lightly, and too gentle to repeat it though ſhe did!"

"Aye,

"Aye, aye, (ſaid Nettleby) a tale never loſes in its circulation, though there's ſeldom any ſmoke without a little fire. That I took her out of the chaiſe from any one, was a very great falſhood. However, there certainly was a married man in the caſe, but whether he was her favourite paramour, I cannot take upon me to determine. All caſualties conſidered, a perſon can't be too careful in theſe caſes; there's no good in a man's expoſing himſelf unneceſſarily to eccleſiaſtical cenſures; actions for defamation are ſerious matters ſometimes."

Young Fitzoſborne, tortured beyond endurance by this converſation, and almoſt ſuffocated with emotion, threw up the ſaſh, and affected to look out.

"I have heard then; (ſaid Cleora Marſdon, provoked to hear the reputation of her young friend treated with ſo little decency) I have heard a very different account of the matter, Mr. Nettleby, for every one ſays that poor Roſina fled from Belle-vue, to avoid being forced to marry yourſelf. I aſſure you I had it from the beſt authority; and what's more, ſince you oblige me to ſpeak out, all the young ladies who were preſent, highly applauded her for her ſpirit; and Miſs Fanny Meadows ſolemnly

lemnly proteſted, that ſhe would a great deal rather be married to the broomſtick, than to any ſuch odd, queer, out of the way old being, and declared, that if ſhe was your wife, ſhe could have no idea of comfort or ſatisfaction in this world, except that of endeavouring to ſhorten your life, by tormenting and worrying you."

"I don't doubt her—I don't doubt her, the wicked young ſlut—I always knew ſhe was a wanton! She deſerves to be locked up in a dark room and fed on bread and water."

"And I aſſure you (reſumed Miſs Marſdon) all the young ladies entirely concurred in her opinion, and wondered, of all things in the world, what could drive the thought of marrying ſuch a beautiful young girl as Roſina, into ſuch an old grey head as your's."

"What was it to them, the prating young goſſips! (cried Nettleby) was it any buſineſs of their's, who, or what I married!"

"And what's ſtill more, (continued Miſs Marſdon) they ſay you go about ſcandalizing Roſina out of pure ſpite; and Mr. Weſtly declared in company,

pany, that I am very well acquainted with, that you treated both him and Roſina in ſuch an abominable manner, that only in compaſſion for your age, and that he thought you fitter for a mad-houſe than any other place, he would have flayed you alive."

This converſation threw Nettleby into ſuch a paroxyſm of rage, that Miſs Marſdon, who ſat next him, aroſe in terror, and flew over to the window at which Hector Fitzoſborne ſtill ſtood. He felt ſo much gratitude for her warm defence of Roſina, that he could ſcarce refrain from embracing her.

Mr. Nettleby, meantime, vented his rage in many ſpiteful invectives againſt the tongues of women, declaring, that if a law were enacted to deprive all female infants of that ungovernable and licentious member, it would be of notorious utility to the ſtate.

"But, dear ſir, (ſaid Lady Bell) what need you put yourſelf into ſuch a paſſion; if you were in love with Roſina, I am ſure you have no reaſon to bluſh for your pre-poſſeſſion; neither need you reſent her refuſal as ſo great an indignity: your having ſo many fellow-ſufferers in this misfortune, ought to

to reconcile you to it; for though Roſina's attractions will infallibly enſure her a numerous train of lovers, conſider, ſhe can marry but one of them."

"Roſina is not yet married then?" ſaid Hector Fitzoſborne in a low voice to Miſs Marſdon, as ſhe ſtood beſide him.

"No—I hope not—I believe not," replied ſhe.

"I in love with her, (cried Nettleby) does your ladyſhip take me for an ideot."

"I think, ſir, (ſaid Mr. Neville, who had hitherto liſtened in ſilence) if the young lady is half as charming as her portrait beſpeaks her, ſuch a paſſion was the moſt inconteſtible evidence of the goodneſs of your taſte."

"The goodneſs of a fiddleſtick! (cried the old gentleman) it would be a fine thing to have it ſaid, that at my time of life I ſuffered my fancy to be caught by a baby-face. No—no—if I had a notion of the girl for a little interval, I was allured by more ſubſtantial attractions. However, when I had leiſure to weigh all chances, and calculate all contingencies, I foreſaw, that not even the large fortune

fortune which I prognoſticate ſhe will one day be poſſeſſed of, could in any wiſe recompenſe me for the probable vexation ſhe might occaſion me; for which reaſon I thought it adviſeable to wave my claim in favour of Harry Hume, who, though he courted her for three weeks with all his might and main, could make no hand of the buſineſs; for the impracticable young wretch thought proper to leave us all in the lurch, and elope with an old villain of a gardener, and whether ſhe has married him or not, Lord knows!"

Hector Fitzoſborne gazed in new aſtoniſhment at this diſcourſe.

"Mr. Nettleby, (ſaid Mrs. Fitzoſborne) I have declined entering into any controverſy with you on this point, becauſe I have wiſhed to preſerve the equality of my temper; but I neither can, nor ought to hear the character of the ſweeteſt, the moſt blameleſs, and the lovelieſt girl that exiſts at this moment, thus infamouſly traduced, without attempting its vindication. If Roſina has withdrawn herſelf clandeſtinely from my protection for an interval, the motives which obliged her to adopt this meaſure, were no leſs powerful than honourable. She was forced—ſhe was driven to it. I could

eaſily

eaſily clear up whatever appears myſterious in her conduct, did propriety allow me to enter into the detail."

As Mrs. Fitzoſborne thus ſpoke, the cheeks of her ſon glowed with joy, and his eyes flaſhed with triumph.

"At leaſt, (ſaid Mr. Fitzoſborne with a ſneer) when a young lady makes an elopement, there is no great breach of charity in ſuppoſing that ſhe provides herſelf with a male companion. But I think we had better change the topic."

"Aye, ſo we had, (ſaid Nettleby) too much time has been already waſted on a very worthleſs one. Pray, Mr. Fitzoſborne, have you ever heard how that cauſe was determined, that ſubſiſted ſo long between, &c. &c."

Whilſt Mr. Nettleby harangued on his favorite ſubject, the law, the ladies in a low voice purſued the ſubject which had been thus interrupted; and all, except Lady Flora, concurred in ſpeaking of Roſina with tenderneſs and pity. They ſhortly afterwards went into the garden, and Hector Fitzoſborne found an opportunity of drawing his mo-

ther aſide to demand a ſolution of the doubts which agitated and perplexed him; for though entirely convinced of the faultleſſneſs of Roſina's conduct, he ſtill greatly apprehended her having formed ſome engagement that would prove an inſuperable barrier to the union, of which he had ſo many years cheriſhed the idea. But when aſſured that his fears were without foundation; that Roſina was ſtill diſengaged—when made acquainted with her motives for leaving his father's houſe, his ſpirits roſe in proportion to their former depreſſion, his admiration became more fervent, and his tenderneſs more animated. In her elopement he ſaw ſomewhat extravagant and romantic—but it was the romantic generoſity of a noble mind, which, when the hatred of oppreſſion inherent in ſuch minds, baniſhed her from the houſe of his father, refuſed to involve his mother in the diſgraceful conſequences of a ſeparation from her huſband: he flattered himſelf it would be impoſſible for her to conceal her retreat from a vigilance ſo active and intereſted as his. Every bar to his wiſhes ſeemed already removed; Roſina ſeemed already his own. No longer depreſſed by the apprehenſions which had preyed on his ſpirits the preceding part of the day; when he returned to the company, all his natural vivacity was reſtored him, and Mr. Nettleby had

no

no longer any reaſon to compliment him on his taciturnity.

Lady Bell and Mr. Neville left Belle-vue immediately after ſupper; Mrs. Fitzoſborne and the young ladies retired ſoon afterwards. The gentlemen ſtaid to finiſh their bottle, and Mr. Fitzoſborne deſirous to know his ſon's opinion of Lady Flora, mentioned to him in a careleſs manner, his having been appointed her guardian, and from thence took occaſion to expatiate on the largeneſs of her fortune, and the ſplendor of her connexions. It has been already ſaid, that when Mr. Fitzoſborne had ſo warmly endeavoured to promote Mr. Hume's union with Roſina, he had made him the confidant of his deſigns on Lady Flora; that gentleman, who omitted no opportunity of recommending himſelf to his patron, and who ſtill perhaps cheriſhed a ſecret hope that Roſina, whom he was inclined to believe innocent, might ſtill be prevailed on to liſten to his addreſſes, when, on her return from a retreat, of which he imagined ſhe would ſhortly grow weary, found young Fitzoſborne united to another woman, now began a panegyrick on the charms of Lady Flora, ſo florid and laboured, that young Fitzoſborne, who could not penetrate its ſecret deſign, was ſurpriſed, and liſtened in ſilence to this laviſh

eulogium of a perſon, who in his own eſtimation merited it ſo little.

"The girl is like the reſt of them, (ſaid Nettleby, who would not ſo long have ſuffered his nephew to harangue without interruption, had he not been nodding in his chair) but I wiſh you would find ſome theme of more importance to hold forth on, if hold forth you muſt—are we to be bored all night with the inſignificant chit!"

"But before we diſmiſs the ſubject, (ſaid Mr. Fitzoſborne) I ſhould wiſh to enquire my ſon's opinion of my ward."

"My opinion, ſir, (replied Hector Fitzoſborne) I am really not conſcious that I have formed any."

"That is ſtrange, methinks, (replied his father) Lady Flora, I ſhould ſuppoſe, is not an object to be viewed with ſuch total indifference by a man at your time of life."

"If obliged to decide on her ladyſhip's merits, (replied young Fitzoſborne) I believe I ſhould addreſs her as the fox did the buſto in the carver's ſhop;

ſhop; O la belle tete! qu'elle pitie qu'elle n'ait point de cervelle!"

"A very juſt deciſion, (cried Nettleby) a little made up thing, all gewgaw, tinſel and frippery—but as to her having no brains, I promiſe you ſhe is not one jot the worſe on that account; if they have any little portion of ſagacity, what uſe do they make of it but to torment and out-wit us, like that other young imp, Roſina. If men muſt marry, they would do well to look out for the greateſt ideots that are to be found in the ſex; and as this lady Flora ſeems to be quite ſufficiently ſilly and empty, and that her fortune is ſo large, and her connexions ſo deſirable, I think you would do well to avail yourſelf of the influence your father poſſeſſes in quality of her guardian, and get yourſelf married to her if you can."

"I thank you for your advice, ſir, (replied Hector Fitzoſborne) little inclination as I feel to follow it: though I allow, were inſipidity a neceſſary ingredient in matrimonial felicity, her ladyſhip ſeems to poſſeſs a very adequate proportion of this lethargic quality: but whenever I marry, I ſhall hope to find in the ſociety of my wife, a cor-

dial to brighten and vivify my exiſtence—not an anodyne potion to ſet me a-ſleep."

Young Fitzoſborne, who had been appriſed by his mother, of his father's deſigns on Lady Flora, and beheld in her the little idol to whom Roſina had been ſacrificed, could not avoid beholding her with contempt and diſlike; and had with pleaſure availed himſelf of this opportunity of manifeſting to his father, his averſion to the alliance he knew he meditated.

"You are very ſevere, ſir, (ſaid Mr. Fitzoſborne, with an air of diſpleaſure) even as the ward of your father, Lady Flora might be entitled to a little more conſideration."

"If I have erred, ſir, (replied Hector Fitzoſborne, ſmiling) Mr. Nettleby has been to blame; I only allowed the juſtice of the claims he attributed to her ladyſhip; and though her perfections don't greatly ſuit my taſte, you will find ſuch numbers of men of a contrary opinion, that you can meet no difficulty in diſpoſing of your ward to much better advantage."

"If

« If numbers are of that opinion, (returned Mr. Fitzoſborne) numbers are probably in the right. There is nothing more ridiculous in a young man, than an affected ſingularity of ſentiment."

« I believe (ſaid young Fitzoſborne) no affected ſingularity will be imputed to me, even though I ſhould profeſs a diſlike to a union with a woman of Lady Flora's caſt of character. If I ever marry, it ſhall be in the expectation of being happy; but the idea of happineſs could never be connected in my mind with that of Lady Flora; however, ſince the ſubject diſpleaſes you, we will drop it to be reſumed no more."

Mr. Fitzoſborne not judging the preſent to be a proper period to purſue the ſubject, devoured his chagrin in ſilence, and the company immediately afterwards broke up.

## CHAP. IX.

### MR. HUME SPRINGS NEW GAME.

HECTOR Fitzoſborne retired to his chamber, and though infinitely leſs happy than he had that morning expected to find himſelf before the cloſe of the day, yet ſo far relieved from the anxious and miſerable uncertainty he had experienced in the courſe of it, that he enjoyed an enviable ſtate of comparative felicity. After having tenderly kiſſed the little portrait that had been for four years the companion of his travels, he went to bed and fell aſleep; and the power who preſides over the dreams of lovers, inceſſantly repreſented Roſina to his imagination, as gentle and engaging as ſhe was beautiful and amiable.

Mr.

Mr. Hume, meantime, revolved in his mind the preceding converſation. He felt ſome ſurpriſe at the philoſophic indifference of young Fitzoſborne, in reſpect to advantages ſplendid enough to dazzle the eyes of moſt men; and though he was far from joining in his uncle's opinion, and eſteeming Lady Flora's alliance the more deſirable on account of her ignorance and folly, he thought theſe diſadvantages ſo greatly over-balanced by her rank and opulence, that he could not forbear to regard as very enviable, the union for which young Fitzoſborne had expreſſed ſo great a contempt. Hope is the child of ambition: Lady Flora very young, and very ſilly, might poſſibly be captivated by the attentions, which the enlightened underſtanding of Roſina had ſo acutely traced to their origin. Impudence, he heard and ſaw, was a moſt ſucceſsful quality: many, in ſimilar circumſtances, had ſucceeded; at leaſt he could loſe nothing by the experiment, except Mr. Fitzoſborne's favour; and he thought it would be politic to riſk that trifling advantage, when ſo much greater emolument was at ſtake. It is true he knew his patron intended Lady Flora for his ſon; but that ſon had already explicitly avowed his averſion to ſuch a connexion; and even though he had not, Mr. Hume was not burdened with one jot of that troubleſome ſimpuloſity,

which proves ſo great a ſtumbling block to its poſſeſſor, in the road to riches and diſtinctions, and keeps many a man ſtruggling with ill fortune in the vale of life, whilſt thoſe of his competitors, who dexterouſly caſt it aſide, outſtrip him in the race, and arrive at the ſummit of honours and preferments. Sleep at length overpowered his ſenſes, and Plutus, the God of his idolatry, poured out to his view ſhining heaps of imaginary treaſure.

From the very next day Mr. Hume commenced his attacks on the heart of Lady Flora; and as Mrs. Fitzoſborne had formerly predicted, he found that territory in ſo weak and defenceleſs a ſtate, that it required but little addreſs to render himſelf abſolute maſter of it. He ſoon perceived Mrs. Flaherty's aſcendant, and was ſenſible of the neceſſity of ſecuring her intereſt by a handſome douceur, which that politic gentlewoman, after ſome conſultation with herſelf, determined to accept. She well knew that it was only from her ladyſhip's forming a connexion of this clandeſtine nature, that herſelf could derive any ſubſtantial advantage; as a perſon whoſe rank and fortune were ſuitable to Lady Flora's, would have no neceſſity for purchaſing her approbation of his addreſſes; and ſhe determined to turn her influence to the beſt poſſible account, and

and diſpoſe of her vote and intereſt to the higheſt bidder.

Lady Flora ſoon made her the confidant of Mr. Hume's paſſion, and Mrs. Flaherty, previouſly engaged by a retaining fee of thirty guineas, pleaded the cauſe of her client with her uſual eloquence and ſucceſs.

"But dear Flaherty, (ſaid Lady Flora) what would my family ſay, if I ſhould encourage the addreſſes of a perſon ſo greatly my inferior?"

"Lard, mem, (returned the confidant) what could they ſay, but that love levels all diſtinctions, and ſure they muſt be more ignorant than *ſelvidges* not to know that. And as to the young gentleman's being ſo greatly beneath you, I dare ſay he will be ſoon on the bench, and then of courſe he'll be made a lord of, as many a one has been, that has had a great deal worſe beginnings—them things happen every day."

"They certainly do," ſaid Lady Flora.

"However, mem, if your ladyſhip does not find yourſelf diſpoſed to encourage the poor young gen-

tleman, it would be kind to let him know his deſtiny, and not keep him in *diſpenſe*; for upon my reputation, mem, I never ſaw an example of a gentleman's falling ſo *virulently* in love in a few days time."

"Yes, indeed, (ſaid Lady Flora) he is moſt violently in love, poor fellow! or elſe, as he told me, he never ſhould have had preſumption to declare his paſſion; for he proteſted he loved without hope, and entreated nothing but my compaſſion; ſo you know, Flaherty, it would have been quite ill-natured to have refuſed him that; and indeed I could not if I had wiſhed it, for I am ſure he put his handkerchief to his eyes three times, and was in ſuch diſtreſs, that I could ſcarcely help crying.—Mr. Hume's very modeſt, Flaherty."

"O, exceedingly modeſt, mem—that's quite his fort, mem."

"And I think he has an agreeable perſon."

"Your ladyſhip ſays very true; I proteſt mem he is quite a very pretty gentleman, and I dare ſwear he will cut a figure yet, whoever lives to ſee it; for he has words at will, mem."

"Yes,

"Yes, ſo he has indeed, (ſaid Lady Flora) I proteſt it would have made your heart ache to have heard him bewailing his hopeleſs paſſion; it put me ſo in mind of ſomething I had ſeen on the ſtage: it was really very moving—I believe I did weep a few drops; however, I took care not to give him the ſlighteſt encouragement; but I aſked him what his uncle meant by ſaying he had been courting that Roſina?"

"Well, mem, and what did he ſay to that?"

"Why he told me a long ſtory how Mr. Fitzoſborne wanted to perſuade the old man to marry her, merely to rid the houſe of her, becauſe he was quite provoked with the fuſs Mrs. Fitzoſborne made about a creature of that ſort; and he made him believe ſhe was to have a great fortune, and ſo contrived to inveigle the old fool into a ſort of promiſe; however, he ſoon began to find him out, and grew afraid; and then he wanted to ſhift the performance of his promiſe on his nephew. So, in compliance with his uncle's whims, becauſe he is to leave him a very great fortune, he pretended to court her for a week or two; though he had always a ſhocking diſlike to her, and thinks her quite ordinary; and he ſays that that picture in the drawing-room,

ing-room, that one is ſo bored with, is ſo monſtrouſly flattered, that it reſembles me infinitely more than it does her."

"And he ſays very right indeed, mem; I aſſure you I always thought ſo."

"But dear Flaherty, what would you have me ſay to Mr. Hume when he next addreſſes me."

"Lard, mem, how can I pretend to direct your ladyſhip in any thing. To be ſure, if you were to marry ſome great Lord, he would think himſelf your ladyſhip's equals, and not be one bit obliged to you for having him: whereas Mr. Hume would think himſelf bound to adore your ladyſhip all the days of his life for your condeſcenſion, and be ready to kiſs the ground you go on, and lay his hands under your ladyſhip's feet."

"That's very true indeed, (ſaid Lady Flora) I did not think of that before; then you think, Flaherty, I may indulge him with ſome hope."

"But pray, mem, take care to let him have, as it were, but a very little ſpice of it at a time; for above all things, your ladyſhip muſt take care not to let

let yourſelf down; and a young lady ſhould always keep her lover, let him be never ſo much favoured, for a conſiderable time at arm's length, before ſhe confeſſes her mutual *ſinſations*."

This laſt piece of advice Mrs. Flaherty threw in, not through any regard to Lady Flora's delicacy, but with a mercenary view to her own intereſt: by protracting the terms of Mr. Hume's courtſhip, ſhe imagined ſhe ſhould gain time, and multiply her opportunities of ſelling her ſecret ſervices to the beſt advantage: but in Mr. Hume ſhe found a competitor, whoſe talents were fully equal to her own, and whoſe opportunities of exerting them were ſuperior.

CHAP.

## CHAP. X.

Licentious Hymen joins their willing hands,
And looſely twines the meretricious bands.

SANVIN.

MR. Hume played his game with ſuch ſubtlety, and knew ſo well how to avail himſelf of the aſcendant which the weakneſs of Lady Flora's underſtanding had enabled him to acquire over her mind; that ſpite of the exerted efforts of the waiting gentlewoman, in leſs than three weeks he perſuaded her to conſent to an elopement from Belle-vue, and a private marriage. The former favourite, amazed and confounded at the rapidity of his operations, and mortified and provoked to ſee her authority thus ſuddenly ſuperſeded, debated with herſelf, whether it might not be for her intereſt

reſt to prevent the execution of this project, by betraying it to Mr. Fitzoſborne; but recollecting, that in the courſe of the inveſtigation, of which ſuch a diſcovery would be naturally productive, the bribes ſhe had received from Mr. Hume, would inevitably be brought forward, and ſupply the cleareſt evidences of her corruption, ſhe reſolved to make a virtue of neceſſity, and acquieſce with ſeeming ſatisfaction, in the meaſures which ſhe wanted influence to prevent. But Mr. Hume was not to be cajoled or deceived; he perfectly entered into the ſpirit of Mrs. Flaherty's proceedings; and conſcious that the ſame mercenary ſpirit that induced her to ſell Lady Flora to him, would operate as powerfully in favour of any other man who might bid high enough for her ſervices; he thought Lady Flora very unſafe, whilſt ſhe continued under the influence of ſo pernicious an adviſer; and therefore inſiſted on her diſmiſſing Mrs. Flaherty from her ſervice the morning after their marriage: which after many tears and expoſtulations ſhe conſented to do. Lady Flora loved the flattery more than the flatterer, and concluding that ſhe ſhould find in her huſband the ſame paraſitical compliance with her whims, and extravagant admiration of her charms, which he had manifeſted whilſt her lover,

was

was therefore prevailed on to part with her former favourite with the leſs repugnance.

Mr. Fitzoſborne was thunderſtruck at this event, and extremely enraged at the treachery of Hume. Mrs. Fitzoſborne, though ſhe had entertained ſome ſuſpicion that a ſcheme of this nature was in agitation, was yet exceedingly ſurpriſed at the ſuddenneſs of its execution. Much as ſhe wiſhed to be rid of Lady Flora, ſhe would have acquainted Mr. Fitzoſborne with her ſuſpicions of Mr. Hume's intentions, had ſhe not thought it very probable, that if prevented from forming this connexion, her ladyſhip might enter into ſome other, infinitely more imprudent, and become the prey of ſome ſharper, equally abandoned in morals and neceſſitous in circumſtances: ſhe therefore joined with her ſon (who was rejoiced to find his deſtined bride thus conveniently diſpoſed of) in endeavouring to diſarm Mr. Fitzoſborne's reſentment, and reconcile him to his ward, and the huſband ſhe had choſen for herſelf; a taſk too difficult to be ſuddenly effected.

## CHAP. XI.

### THE LAWYER GETS THE GOUT.

HECTOR Fitzoſborne, mean while, had employed his time and his attention in making enquiries for Roſina, as fruitleſs as they were diligent. The letters his mother conſtantly received from her, heightened his deſire for the diſcovery of her retreat, and the uncommon circumſtances by which his paſſion was attended, appeared to give it new energy and intereſt. This tenderneſs for a woman to whom he was almoſt a ſtranger, ſeemed whimſical even to himſelf: it was a delightful chimera, foſtered by endearing remembrance, and cheriſhed by fond anticipation. Roſina had long been deſtined by his mother to be his; in the marriage of Lady Flora, one principal obſtacle to their union appeared to be removed; he relied much on his father's

father's partiality, and fancied that the obſcurity which ſtill clouded the retreat of Roſina, was the only impediment that remained to be ſurmounted. Under pretence of amuſing himſelf with a trip to England, he went to Parkgate, and from thence proceeded to Cheſter, after having made the moſt minute enquiries for Roſina and Auſtin; on the ſame errant he proceeded to Liverpool, and it is unneceſſary to add, with ſimilar ſucceſs. From the dates of Roſina's letters, he ſaw that they frequently reached Ireland two or three days after they were written, and convinced by this circumſtance that her retreat could not be very diſtant, he wandered for near a month, through the weſtern provinces of England, and through Wales in ſearch of it. Convinced, at length, of the hopeleſſneſs of his enquiries, he returned to Ireland melancholy and diſpirited.

The following winter, in purſuance of the plan ſhe had long meditated, Mrs. Fitzoſborne, in ſpite of the remonſtrances and expoſtulations of her huſband, cauſed Roſina's claim to the inheritance of her family, to be revived; a law agent was provided for the purpoſe of conducting the ſuit, and young Fitzoſborne went himſelf to London to inſpect a buſineſs, in which he felt himſelf ſo deeply intereſted;

intereſted; for he was fully conſcious, that were the ſuit to be decided in her favour, now that Lady Flora was otherwiſe diſpoſed of, his father would ceaſe to oppoſe her admittance into his family. For two enſuing terms, the ſuit was carried with the ſame probability of ſucceſs which had always attended it; but the final deciſion of it was ſtill warded off by the wealth and influence of the oppoſite party.

Wearied with the delays of the law, in ſpring young Fitzoſborne returned to Ireland. Mr. Fitzoſborne in the mean time had been perſuaded to a reconciliation with Mr. Hume and Lady Flora; and in the ſummer gave them an invitation to ſpend ſome time at Belle-vue. Poor Lady Flora had long ſince been convinced, by experience, that the happineſs ſhe had ſo fondly promiſed herſelf, ſhe ſhould find in the connexion in which ſhe had ſo unwarily engaged herſelf, was a phantom. When the arts of adulation had ceaſed to be neceſſary, Mr. Hume had utterly dropped them; the fondneſs of which he had feigned an exceſs, and of which he had at firſt felt ſome ſmall portion, had long ſince given place to a coldneſs that bordered on diſlike. Teazed with her caprice, wearied with her inſipidity, and diſguſted with her folly and ex-

travagance, though he never treated her with abſolute brutality, he often found it difficult to ſubdue his contempt; and was ſometimes tempted to repine at the poſſeſſion of a fortune, which had been purchaſed at the expence of his boſom peace, and domeſtic comfort. He very willingly accepted Mr. Fitzoſborne's invitation to Belle-vue, determining to ſtation his lady there as long as he could, and reſolving, that whilſt ſhe continued there, his own viſits to her ſhould be as ſhort and unfrequent as conſiſted with decency.

At this period Mr. Nettleby experienced a ſevere attack of the gout in his ſtomach, for which the phyſicians ordered him immediately to Bath. Though much averſe to this journey, which, on calculating caſualties and contingencies, he foreſaw muſt neceſſarily be productive of conſiderable expence, he was at length induced to undertake it, and Mr. Hume, through pretended motives of duty, declared his intention of accompanying him, glad to be rid of his domeſtic burden, even for a ſhort interval; and not judging it ſafe to truſt the old gentleman, in his then precarious ſtate of health, amongſt ſtrangers, who might poſſibly influence him with reſpect to the ſettlement of his affairs. It was greatly Mr. Hume's intereſt, that the diſpoſition

position of his effects might be left to the law, and whenever the old man had expressed any inclination to execute a will, he had hitherto artfully contrived to divert him from the intention, which, the tendency that old persons usually have, to fancy themselves almost immortal, rendered no difficult task to him.

The violent antipathy Lady Flora had with reason conceived for Mr. Nettleby, prevented her from having the least inclination to be of this party; and induced her to consent to remain quietly at Belle-vue until their return.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XII.

### AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE INTRODUCED. CROSS EXAMINATION.

TWO days before that appointed for his departure, Mr. Hume came to Belle-vue, to take leave of his lady. In the evening as he and young Fitzoſborne returned on foot from a viſit to Lady Bell, as they paſſed through the neighbouring village, the figure of maſter Solomon Stringer, the pariſh clerk, happened to ſtalk by them. Mr. Hume had ſeen him but once before, on the evening previous to Roſina's departure from Belle-vue, and the circumſtances of the interview, of which he had then been the viſible ſpectator, were ſo extraordinary, that they inſtantly recurred to his recollection. He ſuddenly ſtopped and looked after him.

« The figure of our pariſh clerk ſeems to ſtrike you, (ſaid young Fitzoſborne) had you been a frequenter of church it would have been familiar to you."

« As that is a place I very ſeldom viſit, (replied Hume) I muſt confeſs I never but once before encountered this ſtrange ſpectacle of a man, and my fancy is at preſent leſs ſtruck by his appearance, than by the recollection of the uncommon ſcene I was then witneſs to."

He then related to young Fitzoſborne the conference which had taken place between Roſina, Auſtin, and Solomon, on the eve of her departure: imputing, however, his having overheard it entirely to accident. Fitzoſborne's lively imagination immediately caught fire at this incident. Either Auſtin or Roſina muſt have a correſpondent in Ireland, and the ſuſpicion of ſuch an intelligence, might more reaſonably fall on Solomon, who had long been the intimate of Auſtin, than on any other perſon. He would have inſtantly followed Solomon, and tempted him with the offer of a large ſum of money; but Mr. Hume, who prided himſelf on his dexterity in ſifting out truth by the ſubtilty of croſs-examination, of which his profeſſion ſo fre-

quently rendered the practice neceſſary, entreated him to leave the conduct of the affair to himſelf; which Fitzoſborne, convinced that his talents in this reſpect were ſuperior, readily conſented to.

They proceeded immediately to the humble habitation of Solomon, whom they found ſeated at his work; for on week days, when his eccleſiaſtical dignity was laid aſide, he officiated in the lowly capacity of cobler to the village.

Mr. Hume told him he was glad they had found him alone, as the buſineſs they had come on was of no little importance.

Solomon caſt his eyes downwards to their ſhoes, the ſtate of which he appeared to reconnoitre with great attention.

"Our buſineſs is not in your profeſſional line, (ſaid Mr. Hume) we come to confer with you about matters more momentous."

Solomon bowed his head.

"You are accuſed, (ſaid Mr. Hume) of having aided and abetted in ſecreting a young lady, ward

to

to Mr. Fitzoſborne, from her friends, conjointly with Auſtin, formerly gardener to the aforeſaid Mr. Fitzoſborne. There is ſtrong preſumptive evidence againſt you, and if you don't immediately declare your knowledge of this iniquitous tranſaction, you may expect to be treated, and mal-treated too, with the utmoſt rigour of the law."

"I know nor art, nor part in it," ſaid Solomon.

"Come, come, (continued Mr. Hume) you had better lay aſide this ſolemn grimace, which, however well calculated you may find it to impreſs the vulgar and ignorant with the belief of your ſuperior ſanctity and wiſdom, is very much miſplaced at preſent. To-morrow morning, when you are examined before a juſtice of peace, you will be made to ſpeak out. There is a ſtrong ſuſpicion of foul play in this affair; there is much room to imagine that the young lady has been murdered by you and that other old villain; for it has been depoſed that ſhe was ſeen to confer privately with you both in a ſolitary place in the ſhrubbery, on the evening previous to her departure; and from this and other ſtrong circumſtances, there is reaſon to apprehend that you formed a plot together, to inveigle her away from her friends, for the purpoſe of poſſeſſing

yourſelves of the valuable effects ſhe carried with her, after the perpetration of the aforeſaid barbarous and atrocious murder."

The natural tawny hue of Solomon's phyſiognomy, was converted to livid paleneſs by the virulence of this accuſation.

"I ſwear by the creed of St. Athanaſius, (cried he) and all the incomprehenſibilities therein contained, that I am as innocent of this fact, as the babe that yet ſlumbers in the womb of his mother!"

"I am glad you have learned to ſpeak at laſt, (ſaid Mr. Hume) but proteſtations of innocence will avail you little; as your accomplice in this inhuman murder has abſconded, all the vengeance of the law will fall upon your head; and as the circumſtantial evidence of your guilt is ſo very ſtrong, in all probability you will be condemned to the gallows in leſs than two months; and I will uſe my utmoſt intereſt to have your corpſe gibbited up oppoſite to your own door, by way of a ſcarecrow, to deter others from the like bloody and abominable practices."

"O Lord,

"O Lord, (cried Solomon) who didſt deliver thy holy prophet Daniel from the fang of the ravenous lion, forſake not thy faithful ſervant in this his great peril and adverſity!"

"Come, come, (cried Mr. Hume) none of your ſanctimonious airs; this is not an age to pray for miracles. If you have a mind to ſave your throat from a halter, you muſt, if poſſible, diſcover the retreat of the young lady, and produce her as a living witneſs of your innocence; none other will avail you. In the mean time you need not be much ſhocked at being lodged in goal until your trial can be brought on; for as you are accuſed of murder, you cannot be bailed out; you will certainly find it rather unpleaſant to be thrown into a damp, dark dungeon, with only a little ſtraw to lie on, and no food but bread and water; beſides, the galling weight of the heavy fetters muſt be ſomewhat diſagreeable to thoſe who have never been accuſtomed to them."

Solomon groaned.

"However, (continued Hume) this won't laſt long: you will be releaſed in two or three months, if you can prove your innocence on your trial; if

not, you'll be tuck'd up without benefit of clergy, as the law directs, unleſs you turn King's evidence in time, and impeach your accomplices. So now prepare to go to goal immediately; I expect the officers of juſtice here every moment; for you know theſe criminal proſecutions admit of no delay."

"O Lord—O Lord! (exclaimed Solomon, who trembled with terror as he ſpoke) dungeons, irons, bread and water—halters and gibbets! Why did I ever meddle in this accurſed buſineſs!"

"Then you confeſs yourſelf a party in Roſina's eſcape!" cried Fitzoſborne.

"It was undoubtedly the devil that tempted you, (ſaid Hume) but murder will out."

"Murder, (exclaimed Solomon, who in his confuſion and affright, was ſcarcely conſcious of what he uttered) if the damſel had been murdered, could ſhe write the letters that I have conſtantly remitted to the lady of the manor!"

"O heaven, (cried Fitzoſborne, who had witneſſed the foregoing ſcene with mingled ſenſations of

of hope and apprehenſion) you then are the confident of Auſtin! you are acquainted with Roſina's retreat! Tell me, I entreat—I beſeech you."

"Pſhaw! (interrupted Hume, angrily) theſe nonſenſical tranſports will ſpoil all."

"If you can diſcover where the lady is to be found, (continued he to Solomon) you need be in no pain about your neck. The only inconvenience you have to apprehend in that caſe is, the trifling one of laying in goal for two or three months."

"And is there no way to avoid that heavy tribulation? (cried Solomon) Behold, I tremble like unto a young aſpin, at this bitter blaſt of adverſity—my tongue cleaveth to my mouth for very ſorrow! O Lord, what is to become of thy ſervant!"

"Leave off your canting, (ſaid Mr. Hume) and relate ſimply all your knowledge of this myſterious buſineſs. This gentleman and I poſſeſs great influence, and if we find you innocent of the alledged crime, we will exert it to the utmoſt to prevent your impriſonment."

"But I made an oath upon the church bible," ſaid Solomon.

"Was it tendered you by a magiſtrate," ſaid Hume.

"No."

"Phoo, then it was illegally extorted, and you are by no means bound to the performance of it. Beſides, when your life is at ſtake, it is no time to indulge yourſelf in religious ſcruples, and qualms of conſcience."

This trial was too great for the integrity of Solomon, who immediately related, in his laconic ſtyle, all his knowledge of the tranſaction; and as a corroborating teſtimony of his innocence, he drew from under his bed an old boot, which had long ſerved him as the repoſitory of his money and papers of conſequence, from whence, after much ſearching and rummaging, he produced the following epiſtle, in which Auſtin had lately encloſed to him a letter from Roſina to Mrs. Fitzosborne.

TO MR. SOLOMON STRINGER.

FRIEND SOLOMON,

YOUR letter of the fifth inſtant came ſafe to hand. I was right glad to heere as the goode fammillie be ſo ſtoute and hartie—but as to the enquirys that they keeps a makeing about Miſs Roſina, it's all mere nonſence, for ſhe's as ſnug as a bug in a rug, and they may ſhake theire cap at her, 'till ſuch time as ſhe takes another crotchet to go home again, as ſhe did to whiſk away from them, for no one reaſon that I knows about under the ſun.

" But be it for better, or be it for worſe,
" Be govern'd by him that carries the purſe."

Not that ſhe has any great matters left in her's by this time, poor dear young lady!—for a wee houſe has a muckle mouth; and though our mice hops upon crutches as it were, I promiſe you it is as much as we can do to make both ends meet. However, if it was not for ſome peepels preverceniſs, we might be fixed in another gueſs manner—and if I was a goode ſkribe, I might tel fine ſtorys—but its a long lane that has no turn. To be ſure, if it was not to her owne likeing, it would be a hard thing

to ſee a fine young lady like her kept pulling the devil by the taile in this poor beggarly way; but when things comes to the worſt they'll mende, for hunger, they ſay, will brake thorough ſtoane walles, and that's my comfort, though God forbid I ſhould live to ſee her father's daughter brought to ſuch a paſs. Howſomever, don't you upon no account blab. If madam Fitzoſborne gets the wind of a word, how that you are in any wiſe conſarn'd with us, ſheed come a pumping of you and offering you money; for I knows her as well as a dog knows his diſh; but if you turn taile in any ſhape, it will be the worſte turn for you that ever you did; for you know I have you under my thumb in regard to the money I lent you, and can make you pay for the roſte, and ſend you to rot in a jale whenever I pleaſes.

I remain your loveing friend

A HODGKINSON.

Deliver the encloſed as before, and direct as uſual to Auſtin Jones, that being the name I chooſes to go by in thos parts.

This

This epiſtle, which for many days had repoſed quietly in the toe of Solomon's old greaſy boot, was now transferred to the throbbing boſom of Fitzoſborne, and received from his lips a thouſand paſſionate kiſſes. He threw Solomon his purſe, which contained more than double the money he owed to Auſtin, and flew to communicate the joyful tidings to his mother, whoſe raptures at this unexpected diſcovery were not leſs animated than his own.

## CHAP. XIII.

### A SHORT CHAPTER.

IT was agreed between Mrs. Fitzoſborne and her ſon, that this tranſaction ſhould be carefully concealed from the knowledge of Mr. Fitzoſborne, and that Hector ſhould accompany Nettleby and Hume to Wales, under pretence of making an excurſion for his amuſement, diſcover Roſina's retreat, to which the poſt mark of Auſtin's letter appeared to be a ſufficient guide, and perſuade

her to return with him immediately to Ireland; whilſt Mrs. Fitzoſborne, who would have been the joyful companion of this journey, had her health at that period been equal to the fatigue of it, was to prepare Lady Bell for her reception in the intrim. She had formerly been prevented from conſigning Roſina to the protection of that lady, by the frequent viſits which a young baronet, who was related to Lady Bell, made at her houſe, and whoſe paſſionate admiration of Roſina, threatened to interfere with her favourite views. This objection was now removed by the gentleman's having left the kingdom, and the manſion of Lady Bell ſeemed on every account a moſt pleaſing and unexceptionable aſylum for her young favourite.

In purſuance of this plan, young Fitzoſborne ſet off next day with Mr. Hume for Dublin, and very early the following morning ſailed in the Holyhead packet, with him and Mr. Nettleby.

Though Roſina's retreat was conſiderably out of the direct road to Bath, Mr. Hume had ſo ſtrong an inclination to witneſs the concluſion of an adventure, in which he had acted ſo conſequential a part, that he reſolved to impoſe on the old gentleman, who was an utter ſtranger to the true motive of Fitzoſborne's

Fitzoſborne's journey, and no leſs a novice in reſpect to the geography of the country they travelled through, and made him believe they took the ſtraight road to the place of their deſtination, whilſt in reality they deviated pretty widely from it; a deception they found it very eaſy to practiſe; for had the old gentleman been inclined to make enquiries, he met no perſon who could either anſwer or underſtand them.

On the evening of the ſecond day after their departure from Dublin, they arrived at the town, of which Auſtin's letter bore the poſt mark. In conſequence of their enquiries at the poſt-office, they diſcovered that they were ſtill four miles diſtant from the reſidence of Roſina. With ſome difficulty they perſuaded Mr. Nettleby to move onwards, and arrived pretty late in the evening at a ſorry inn, not more than half a mile diſtant from the cottage. Here they depoſited their luggage, and the old gentleman, and having got the beſt directions they could, they ſet out on foot, and alone, in queſt of the retreat of Roſina.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XIV.

### A SCHOOL MISTRESS.

IT was very duſkiſh in the evening when they left the inn; and as the woods they had to paſs through added to the gloom, it was not wonderful that they miſſed their way. After wandering until it was almoſt dark, through paths unknown and unfrequented, they eſpied a female figure bending over a brook, from whence ſhe ſeemed to be collecting ſome herbs, which bore a nearer reſemblance to one of the wizard ſiſters of Macbeth, than to "*any mortal mixture of earth's mould.*" Although almoſt hopeleſs of receiving any information from a perſon, who moſt probably could not underſtand their language, they approached and addreſſed her, and were moſt agreeably ſurpriſed, when, by her accent and language, they perceived her to be an Engliſh woman.

man. They enquired the way to the cottage of Auſtin, to which ſhe very civilly directed them.

"Pray, (ſaid Fitzoſborne, from whoſe thoughts Roſina was never abſent) does any young girl reſide with him?"

"Yes, ſir, his daughter; I have ſeen the girl often enough, though I never viſited her; for people don't much like to notify ſtrangers, and folks that nobody knows."

"And is not the daughter very handſome?" ſaid Mr. Hume.

"Yes, ſir, as far as exterial goes, there is no deficiency to be laid to her charge."

"And is not her conduct equally faultleſs?" enquired Fitzoſborne eagerly.

"As to that, (the dame replied) that ſhe could not take upon her to diſſert that it was: but be it as it might, it was no buſineſs of her's to publicate her neighbour's backſlidings."

"Backſlidings!

"Backſlidings! (repeated Fitzoſborne) what errors could ſhe have fallen into—what temptations could ſhe have to err in ſuch a place as this!"

"As poor a place as you may think it, ſir, (replied the dame) I'll aſſure you it is not ſo void of grandees and great noblemen as you ſeem inclinable to imaginate. Satan is always ready to lay his ſnares in every place, for them that are willing to run into them."

"What ſnares—what noblemen!" cried Fitzoſborne, impatiently.

"O as to the Lord, (returned the hag) I don't diſſeverate that he laid any ſnares for her: all the pariſh ſay that ſhe was as willing as he, and where that's the caſe, he can't be accuſated of any falſeneſs. For my own part, I never meddle in theſe matters; I have been for ten years ſchool-miſtreſs in this pariſh, and it would ill-befit my ſtation to ſet an ill example to the youth that's placed under my intuition. Beſide, I only ſtepped out to pick a few water creſſes for my ſupper; and not expecting to meet company. I came out quite in a diſshabille, as you ſee."

"What

"What is the nobleman's title?" ſaid Fitzoſborne.

"O that I may confide to any body, (returned the matron) becauſe every body knows that he is called Lord Raymond, and keeps at Madam Evelyn's, at Druid-Grove."

"Lord Raymond!" cried Fitzoſborne, whilſt the blood flufhed ſuddenly to his cheeks, for he inſtantly recollected that his mother had acquainted him with his former partiality for Roſina, and the means ſhe had uſed to remove her from his inſidious attentions.

"Oh, (ſaid Hume, obſerving his emotions) you muſt not ſuffer yourſelf to be influenced by theſe village cenſures: defamation is no leſs the vice of the cottage, than of the court."

"What, (ſaid Fitzoſborne) can you ſuppoſe me weak enough to build ſuſpicion on ſuch a foundation!"

"As to that matter, (ſaid the dame) I defy any one to accuſate me with diſtracting from the merit of any body: for I make it one of the tenants of my religion

religion never to back-bite my neighbours; beſides, I always like to keep myſelf diſtricated from ſuch ſcrapes, for fear of bringing myſelf into a preliminary, from which I might find it difficult to eradicate myſelf. But it's very well authenticated that ſhe refuſed lawful marriage with a great grandee, one Sir Gregory Grubton, on his lordſhip's account; and when he's perpetually at the cottage, paying his devours to her, and that folks ſees him coming over the garden hedge in a clandeſticle manner in the night time, why to be ſure they will ſay it is not for nothing; and who can ſtop an evil tongue—the world will be cenſhurous, not conſidering the heinouſity of the crime they are committing. But be matters as they may, I know every body notifies it, and Madam Evelyn and the ladies that uſed conſtantly to make recurſions to the cottage, won't ſo much as look at the ſame ſide of the way where ſhe is. She's a loſt girl indeed!"

Fitzoſborne, however, ſtrongly inclined to diſregard theſe inſinuations, felt them ſo intolerably painful to him, that reminding Hume it was almoſt night, he hurried him away, and purſued his way to the cottage according to the inſtructions the ſchool-miſtreſs had given him. Mr. Hume, who was ſomewhat fatigued with his journey, and a ſtranger

to

to the emotions which agitated the boſom of Fitzoſborne, would have perſuaded him to delay his viſit till morning.

"I will not ſleep until I have ſeen Roſina, (ſaid Fitzoſborne) for greatly as I deſpiſe the malicious inſinuations which that beldame has thrown out, the intelligence that ſhe is viſited by Lord Raymond, diſpleaſes me. That he admired her, I know; for he has been formerly intimately acquainted with my family."

"If that be the caſe then, (ſaid Hume) I think there is great reaſon to imagine that their meeting in this place was nothing leſs than accidental.—— Faith it appears very ſuſpicious. To ſay the truth, there was ſomething ſtrangely inconſiſtent in the circumſtances of her elopement, which I never yet heard attributed to any adequate cauſe."

"To thoſe who were intimately acquainted with her motives for that elopement, (returned Fitzoſborne) there appeared no inconſiſtency. Her meeting Lord Raymond in this place has been certainly accidental; for Roſina could never have ſo widely deviated from the ingenuous purity of her character, as to degrade herſelf by a mean and unworthy

worthy condeſcenſion, or impoſe on the unſuſpicious tenderneſs of my mother, by a ſtudied diſplay of artificial generoſity, and hypocritical pretences to a greatneſs of mind ſhe poſſeſſed not.—No—no, notwithſtanding appearances, Roſina is certainly innocent! come on—a quarter of an hour will diſſipate our doubts!"

The ſcene that ſucceeded to this converſation, has already been deſcribed. On his firſt entrance into the cottage, Fitzoſborne, though too candid and generous lightly to harbour ſuſpicions injurious to Roſina's honour, could not avoid beholding in Lord Raymond, a dangerous and favoured rival, and in the rage of repreſſed jealouſy, he treated Roſina in the cold and reſentful manner that has been formerly related; and in the latter part of that interview, it was not wonderful that his faith, in the rectitude of her conduct, ſhould have yielded to ſuch ſtrongly concurring evidences of her culpability.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XV.

### AN INCENDIARY LETTER.

FITZOSBORNE had left the cottage almoſt diſtracted with the rage of jealous indignation, and the grief of diſappointed tenderneſs. The agitation of his mind communicated itſelf to his motion; he ruſhed onwards with a velocity, which Mr. Hume finding very inconvenient, he ſlackened his pace, and followed Fitzoſborne at his leiſure.

On his arrival at the inn, he found the old gentleman ſeated at his ſupper, in no very pleaſant temper. He enquired for Fitzoſborne, and was told by the ſervants, that he had retired to his appartment, which being immediately over the parlour

lour in which ſupper was prepared, he heard him traverſing the room with a haſty ſtep.

"Aye, (ſaid Nettleby) the moment he entered the houſe, inſtead of coming in to enquire how I had come off in the chace I had ſet out on after that little hunch-back'd devil; or ſo much as having the civility to wiſh me good night, up ſtairs he flew, and without reverting to the half ruinated ſtate of this old ſhattered manſion, there has he kept ſtriding about over my head, like an elephant, ſhaking the whole edifice to that degree, that I was apprehenſive leſt it ſhould tumble about my ears; ſo I very civilly ſent up my ſervant with my compliments, to requeſt him to deſiſt; but he deſired him to go to the devil with them, or uſed words to that purpoſe, and ſhoved him out of the room. Well, down I ſat to my ſupper, and not very well pleaſed, as you may imagine, at being treated in ſuch a manner; he all the time ſtumping about juſt as you hear him at preſent; and directly as my nice fricaſeed chicken, that was cooked under my own inſpection, was ſet on the table, down comes a great patch of the plaiſter that he had looſened from the cieling with his prancing about, into the very middle of my diſh—you may ſee the place from whence it fell: I never was in ſuch a conſterna-

tion in my days; I was ſure the roof had fallen in; however, I loſt my good ſupper by it: it is true, they brought me in a ſort of partridge, but if it waſn't for the name for a partridge, a man might as well have ſupped on an old ſtinking magpye. And then, here's no tidings of thoſe raſcally ſervants that I diſpatched after that little frightful goblin. I can't for the life of me get his predictions out of my head: it is the moſt extraordinary incident that ever occurred to me. I have no mind to purſue this journey to Bath: what good can all the medicinal ſprings in the world do me, when my mind is in ſuch an uneaſy ſtate of ſuſpence and apprehenſion! beſide, it's a damned expenſive place, where you are liable to every ſpecies of fraud and impoſition. I wiſh I had never left home: there's nothing like the eye of the maſter; and all caſualties and contingencies well weighed and conſidered, a perſon's property is never ſo ſecure as when under his own immeciate inſpection."

Many other obſervations of the ſame ſtamp were added to this harangue, which was at length interrupted by the landlady, who related, in great terror, that hearing a knocking at the door, and imagining it to be ſome of the ſervants, ſhe had gone to open it, when a man, with a black maſk on his face, had put

put a letter into her hand, desiring her, in a voice that made her tremble, to give it to the old gentleman, and instantly disappeared.

Mr. Nettleby, in great affright and agitation, immediately broke the seal, and with some difficulty decyphered the following lines, which, to his inexpressible horror, he perceived were written in blood.

" This cums to ackwaint yoe, yoe ould stingy neger, that hafing ockashun for a littel munney, it will be propper for yoe to lave fife hunderd ginness under a sartin stone on the top of Pengwyllyn mountin, the seame hafing on it a deth's hed and marrow bones; toe showe yoe what yoe haf to expect if yoe refus to complie with this rekwest, which will very much oblidge youre umbel sarvantes as yoe dissarve. But if you don't do the needful, there's six brave fellors of us, and six good blunderbushis well loded with slugs, that has takin our bible oathes to dimmolish your ould rottin heranium, and blo youre branes to the divil; so the kwestchon is, which yoe will seave, youre noddell or youre munny bags. Wherefore to kinvince yoe we wont stick at nothing, and would as soone murder

murder yoe as looke at yoe, wee haf ritten theſe in owre owne bloods. As witneſs our hands,

| | |
|---|---|
| Roderick Cutthrottle, | Jacob O'Devilly, |
| Peter Fitzbelzebub, | Martin M'Molach, |
| Anthony Manſlaughter, | Andrew Gaſhwell. |

"O heaven and earth! (exclaimed Nettleby) what a diabolical conſpiracy we have here! Yes, it is plain enough, I am beſet on all ſides—my deſtruction is determined! O the infernal incendiaries! I have but one way to avoid them; I muſt get up before day-light to-morrow morning, and make the beſt of my way back to Holyhead. I'll not go to bed at all, I can't ſleep a wink—as ſure as I am alive that little damned hobgoblin that we ſaw to night, is at the bottom of this helliſh confederacy, it is he who is ſetting on theſe deſperadoes to waylay and murder me! I have nothing for it but to give them the ſlip."

It was in vain that Mr. Hume attempted to argue him out of his abſurd apprehenſions, and to convince him that they owed their origin to the miſchievous archneſs of Richard, who perceiving his weakneſs, had taken advantage of it to beſet him with a group of imaginary aſſaſſins—the in-

vincible obſtinacy of his nature rendered him inacceſſible to conviction.

"I admit the poſſibility of your poſition, (ſaid he) but life is too precious a concern to be truſted to the hazard of ſuch uncertain and dangerous contingencies. That incendiary letters are frequently written with more ſerious deſigns than that which you are pleaſed to attribute to this, is a point too well aſcertained in this age of general depravity, to admit of any controverſy. But ſelf-preſervation is the firſt law of nature. Peter Fitzbelzebub, Martin M'Molock, Roderick Cutthrottle! what a hell-fire ſtring of names the ſanguinary villains have invented, to ſtrike a terror! No—no—you may ſay what you pleaſe, my reſolution is taken—A fine figure I ſhould make with my brains blown about my ears. I have nothing for it but flight, ſo pray go up and acquaint Fitzoſborne with my determinations; and deſire him at the ſame time to have his fire-arms in readineſs, in caſe of an attack."

Mr. Hume, conſcious of the impracticable obduracy of his uncle's temper, knew that farther expoſtulation would be fruitleſs, and therefore complied with his deſire.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XVI.

### THE TRAVELLERS PUT TO FLIGHT.

HE found Fitzoſborne gloomy and agitated. He informed him of the letter his uncle had received, and both agreed in aſcribing it to its true author, our little crookback. He then acquainted him with his uncle's conſequent determination, and enquired whether he had any objection to ſetting out with them in the morning?

Fitzoſborne heſitated, "I am unwilling, (ſaid he) to depart without one more effort."

"What, (ſaid Hume) to perſuade Roſina to quit the arms of her lover."

Fitzoſborne ſhuddered, as if ſtung by a ſudden pang. "Yet, allowing that ſhe is guilty," ſaid he, after a pauſe.

"They muſt be blind indeed, who could believe her otherwiſe, (interrupted Hume) after the demonſtration the events of this evening have afforded."

Fitzoſborne's face glowed. "Well, (ſaid he) as yet, however, ſhe is young in error—many circumſtances concur to palliate her fault. My father's harſhneſs, conſpired with my mother's ill-judged partiality to force her to the adoption of a meaſure, which, however innocent in the intention, has entangled her in guilt. But though frail, ſhe is not abandoned. I would ſee her once more. I would awaken her conſcience—her mind naturally pure and honourable, will be eaſily perſuaded to renounce the allurements of illicit pleaſure. O what a triumph, to lead back this poor wanderer to the fold of virtue!"

"What a romantic ſcheme is this! (ſaid Hume) To put this fine plan in execution, you muſt wait until ſhe finds herſelf deſerted by her lover, then, indeed, repentance and remorſe will naturally reſult

ſult from diſappointment and vexation; and on them you may found your ſcheme of reformation; but to fancy that your eloquence can now entice her from the arms of an amiable and favoured lover, and perſuade her to exchange the faſcinating charm of mutual tenderneſs, for the gloomy auſterities of penetential ſorrow, would, indeed, be a viſionary hope. She may poſſibly be reformed hereafter, but after her poſitive refuſal to accompany you to Ireland, any farther attempt to perſuade her to alter her reſolution, for the preſent, at leaſt, would be highly abſurd. And after all, what is the motive which renders you thus ſolicitous for the reſtoration of this ſtrayed lamb? you and Lord Raymond remind me of two wolves; you would ſnatch the prey from his jaws, only to have the ſatisfaction of devouring it yourſelf."

"You wrong me; (returned Fitzoſborne) by all that's ſacred, Roſina Mortimer is the laſt woman breathing, of whom I could form a licentious idea! the virtues of her heart are ſtill dear to me. I ſtill venerate her former purity. I would lead her back to my mother, I would exult in being the inſtrument of her reformation—but I would never ſee her more."

"You are quite a ſpiritual Quixot, (replied Hume, laughing) but if you take my advice, you will indeed ſee her no more. Your perſeverance in this chimerical plan, may produce more ſerious conſequences than you are at preſent aware of. Can you imagine Lord Raymond will not reſent your thus endeavouring to deprive him of his dulcenea?"

"And do you ſuppoſe I am to be intimidated by the reſentment of that villain! (cried Fitzoſborne) catching fire at the inſinuation, I abhor the ſavage ferocity that embrues its hands in blood on every frivolous occaſion; but where our laws aſſign no puniſhment to crimes ſo enormous, ſhall not private juſtice ſupply a remedy to the deficiency, and boldly ſtep forward to avenge the wrongs of the innocent."

"I allow (replied Hume) that his Lordſhip deſerves a halter better than moſt of the poor devils who are deſtined to wear it; and if we could perſuade him to ſtand quietly, and ſuffer us to tuck him up to the firſt tree that was ſtrong enough to bear his weight, I ſhould have no objection to aſſiſt at the operation. But you muſt conſider, that in a fair duel, the chances are equal; the vindicator of innocence

innocence runs an equal riſk with him who violates it: nay, often a greater; for in the latter, ſkill is frequently improved by practice: brutal force is often neceſſary to ward off the vengeance incurred by brutal depravity, and the bravo is generally united with the ſeducer. What then will it avail to the cauſe of virtue, that you ſhould fall beneath the arm of a villain, and be ſent home a mangled corpſe to your diſtracted parents; whilſt your antagoniſt, ſafe and unhurt, might exult in his ſecurity, and with boaſtful arrogance, add another victory to his bloody catalogue."

"Your arguments are convincing, (ſaid Fitzoſborne) we are no more entitled to ſport with our exiſtence, than to deſtroy it. Vengeance belongs to heaven—and it will burſt at laſt! So young—ſo ſweet—ſo beautiful! O villain—villain! If the regions of eternal horror contain a place peculiarly pre-eminent in torture, Roſina, it muſt belong to thy betrayer."

After ſome more expoſtulations and remonſtrances, Hume extorted from him a promiſe, to accompany them on their journey the enſuing morning. He then left him to return to the old gentleman.

Fitzoſborne, ſtill reſtleſs and agitated, continued to revolve in his mind the tranſactions of the paſt evening. All the ſplendid dreams of bliſs, which but a few hours before had ſoothed and delighted his imagination, ſeemed now to be diſſipated forever.

"And is this (ſaid he) the meeting with which I had ſo fondly fed my fancy! is this the reward of my toilſome and unwearied reſearches. To find her thus fallen and deprived—her whom I had venerated as the perfection of humanity—whom I loved with an attachment ſo invariable—a tenderneſs ſo fervent. But now it is over; to indulge this unmanly ſoftneſs, would now be a deſpicable weakneſs. Thus, then, Roſina, continued he, ſnatching from his breaſt the little companion of his travels—thus I tear you from my boſom! ſweet and faithful portrait of an innocence once angelic!" he continued gazing wiſtfully on the picture.

"To my fond heart each morn has ſeen thee preſs'd,
"Each night has laid thee pillow'd on my breaſt;
"Force ſhall not tear thee from that faithful ſhrine,
"Thou ne'er wert his, and ſhalt be ever mine."

"Yes,

« Yes, (cried Fitzoſborne, replacing the picture in his boſom, and apologizing to himſelf for the weakneſs he wanted reſolution to vanquiſh,) Yes, I will ſtill guard thee in my boſom as a ſad ſymbol of the frailty of human nature; a melancholy memento of the vanity of human expectation! Shall I then go without another effort to reclaim her! but to ſtay—to meet the man I abhor—to be ſent home to my mother, perhaps bleeding and breathleſs, or return to her arms a ſelf-accuſed and frantic murderer, reeking from the ſlaughter of a fellow-creature, precipitated to eternity *with all his crimes broad blown.*"

Fitzoſborne ſtarted at the picture, and determined to depart. Soon, however, his reſtleſs imagination returned to Roſina; to write to her at leaſt, could involve him in neither guilt nor peril; the anxious ſolicitude of his mind, dictated the letter which has already been preſented to the reader.

Fitzoſborne walked all night about his chamber, and old Nettleby, whoſe brain was too full of plots, conſpiracies, and aſſaſſinations, to ſuffer him to enjoy a moment's repoſe, entered his apartment before day light, to inform him every thing was pre-

pared for their departure, and to entreat him not to omit charging his fire-arms.

Fitzoſborne, after ſealing his letter, and giving directions that it might be diſpatched early that morning to Roſina, departed before ſun-riſe; and with his two companions, meaſured back the way to Holyhead.

That ſame morning, two hours later, our little crookback ſet out for London, attended by his truſty ſquire and abettor, Gryffyth ap Jenkins. In his way he ſtopped at the inn, to learn what effect had been produced by his incendiary letter, and with no little exultation received the account of the pannic into which it had thrown the old gentleman, and the early decampment of himſelf and his myrmidons. This was a luxurious banquet to Richard's inſatiable appetite for miſchief, and he regaled on it ſumptuouſly during his journey; little conſcious of the mortal, though unintended wound, his wonton archneſs had given to the peace and honour of the poor forlorn Roſina, who was prevented, by Fitzoſborne's early departure, not only from rectifying the miſtakes of the preceeding evening; but alſo from executing her deſign of accompanying him to Ireland: a project, which,

had

had it been accompliſhed, would have vindicated her fame; extricated her from the ſnares of a ſeducer, and ſaved her boſom from many a bitter pang of ſubſequent affliction.

## CHAP. XVII.

### A VISIT OF FRIENDSHIP.

FOR ſome days after the departure of Fitzoſborne, Roſina endeavoured to calm her mind with the hope of receiving a favourable anſwer to her letter to his mother, little imagining it had been ſuppreſſed by Lord Raymond. The fifth day came; the wind had been tolerably fair; ſhe fancied ſhe might have had an anſwer, but no anſwer arrived; and Lord Raymond began to throw out hints that ſhe had none to expect. The ſixth morning ſhe ſent Auſtin to the poſt, from which, as uſual, he returned without a letter. Almoſt in deſpair ſhe wrote the following lines to Mrs. Fitzoſborne.

"Am I then abandoned! Can the baſeleſs ſurmiſes of ignorance—the cruel miſrepreſentations of calumny, out-weigh my ſolemn and reiterated aſſurances of my innocence! Is there then ſo little faith in your friendſhip. Oh, not the concurring teſtimonies of mankind could have perſuaded me to believe you guilty, but for one ſingle moment!

The ſcoffs of the malevolent, the contempt of the ignorant, I could have borne. In your friendſhip I ſhould have found an aſylum—I could have laid my aching head, and repoſed the ſorrows of my burſting heart on your boſom. But to be deſpiſed and neglected by you—you, whoſe eſteem is more dear to me than that of all the world beſide—you, to whoſe friendſhip I judged no ſacrifice too great—to recover whoſe tenderneſs, I could forego every earthly bleſſing! ah, my friend! deſert not your Roſina!"

Roſina was interrupted by the ruſtling of ſilks in the paſſage outſide the door. Her heart palpitated at every noiſe—ſhe often fancied Mrs. Fitzoſborne was on her way to Wales, ſhe flew to the door in tremulous expectation, and beheld Mrs. Evelyn. Diſappointed and confounded at a viſit ſhe had ſo little reaſon to expect, ſhe received her with an

awkward and embarraſſed timidity; they re-entered the parlour together, and for ſome minutes both continued ſilent. Mrs. Evelyn perceived Roſina had been in tears, and ſhe pitied her diſtreſs, though doubtful of its cauſe; for ſhe was not one of thoſe outrageouſly virtuous matrons, who conſider their frailer ſiſters as an excommunicated tribe, excluded from the rights of ſociety, and every gentle duty of humanity. Her ſentiments were candid, her charity was liberal, and ſhe believed that it never was more efficaciouſly exerted, than in upholding the ſteps of the feeble, and reclaiming the wanderers from their errors.

"This viſit, (ſaid ſhe to Roſina, in a tone of much gentleneſs) may, perhaps, ſurpriſe you; its abruptneſs too, may require an apology, and I truſt it has one in the goodneſs of its intention. I rather fear it has been too long deferred, for delays are often dangerous; but my buſineſs required privacy; and the difficulty of finding a time when I knew you would be diſengaged, prevented my coming at an earlier period."

Roſina, who knew Mrs. Evelyn hinted at the long and frequent viſits of Lord Raymond, felt her face glow like crimſon.

"I ſhould

"I ſhould be ſorry to diſtreſs you, (purſued Mrs. Evelyn) but you cannot be unconſcious of the diſadvantageous reports to which your connexion with Lord Raymond has been productive."

Roſina hung her head, unable to reply.

"Nearly as I am related to that nobleman, (continued Mrs. Evelyn) and ſtrongly as I may be perſonally attached to him, parental pre-poſſeſſion cannot blind me to his vices. I fear he has acted a baſe and diſhonourable part by you—I fear he has deceived you."

"Lord Raymond, (returned Roſina, reſuming her ſpirit in the vindication of the man ſhe loved) Lord Raymond has acted no diſhonourable part—he has not deceived me."

"There is, however, candor in this confeſſion; (ſaid Mrs. Evelyn, after a pauſe) he has then informed you of his intended marriage with Lady Elinor Leſley?"

"He did, madam, inform me that ſuch a union was intended."

"Since,

"Since, then, he has anticipated my intelligence, I might have ſpared myſelf the trouble of this viſit (ſaid Mrs. Evelyn, riſing) and yet (turning towards Roſina with a look of compaſſion) impertinent as the liberty may be thought, I would fain ſay ſomething more."

"O ſpeak, madam, (ſaid Roſina) I am perſuaded you can ſay nothing that is not benevolent and compaſſionate: this generous intereſt in the fate of an unhappy ſtranger, is the ſtrongeſt evidence of your humanity. I am wretched—I am miſerable! labouring under imputations the moſt injurious—and no leſs falſe than injurious!"

"If then, the imputations of which you complain, are without foundation, (returned Mrs. Evelyn, with quickneſs) why do you give a colour to them, by continuing to admit and encourage the viſits of the man, on whoſe account you have incurred them?"

"Alas! (replied Roſina) what courſe can I purſue! excluded from ſociety, perſecuted by vexations—ſelf-incurred, perhaps, but not on that account the leſs tormenting: can I voluntarily renounce the only conſolation that remains to me, and

and deny myſelf the counſel and ſociety of the man, who has taught me to look up to him as my future guardian and protector."

"What, (ſaid Mrs. Evelyn in aſtoniſhment) and can you then acknowledge an expectation of finding a guardian and protector in the huſband of Lady Elinor!"

"Ah, madam, (ſaid Roſina) you are deceived."

"Pardon me, (returned Mrs. Evelyn) I fancy it is you who are deceived—and very baſely too."

"That there was a treaty of marriage carrying on, Lord Raymond himſelf confeſſed to me," ſaid Roſina.

"And did he alſo acknowledge to you, that the preparations for its celebration are now in great forwardneſs, and that it is to be ratified immediately on his return to London?"

"O heaven! (cried Roſina) it is impoſſible! through policy alone he ſuffers his family to continue in ſuch an error!"

"Has

"Has he then given you a promiſe of marriage?"

"Yes; at leaſt I think ſo—he has repeatedly offered me an aſylum—what elſe could he allude to?"

"O the ſimple reliance of credulous fondneſs, (cried Mrs. Evelyn) and you really imagined he meant to marry you!"

"In indulging that imagination, madam, (ſaid Roſina, who felt her pride exceedingly hurt by this queſtion) I have, perhaps, been leſs preſumptuous than appearances may lead you to conceive. I am not the daughter of a peaſant—ſprung from a reſpectable family, and juſtly entitled to a noble fortune. I meant not to form a clandeſtine union, where I deemed myſelf not unworthy an avowed and public election. I read your ſurpriſe in your countenance—diſſimulation is now unneceſſary—would to heaven I had never deſcended to it! hear my ſtory, and be yourſelf my judge!"

Roſina then briefly related to Mrs. Evelyn, the circumſtances of her paſt life; whilſt that lady liſtened to them with aſtoniſhment, and reflected on them

them in ſilence, for ſome time after Roſina had concluded her narrative.

"Your elopement, (ſaid ſhe) from the houſe of your benefactreſs, was an action ſo unadviſed, ſo raſh and thoughtleſs, that had it not involved you in diſagreeable conſequences, your eſcape would have been miraculous. However, our time may now be ſpent to more purpoſe, in endeavouring to repair the evil, than in vainly deploring it. I rejoice in the confidence you have placed in me, though the diſcovery of your rank augments my deteſtation of Lord Raymond's baſeneſs."

On this point, however, Mrs. Evelyn found it impoſſible to make Roſina a convert to her opinion.

"Well, (ſaid Mrs. Evelyn) notwithſtanding your credulity in this reſpect, and the giddy ſtep you have taken, I will ſtill believe your underſtanding to be of a ſuperior order. Diveſt yourſelf of the weakneſs of partiality, and bring Lord Raymond's ſincerity to the teſt. A little diſſimulation is ſometimes more than excuſable, it is neceſſary. Treat him with indulgence—feign a compliance you feel not—repreſs your reſentment, ſhould his manners excite it; draw him out by degrees,

degrees, and avail yourſelf of an unguarded moment, to read the purpoſes of his heart; if it is polluted by no guilty views, it will derive honour from the inſpection; but never can I believe that a man can have a ſincere affection for the woman whoſe character he endeavours to traduce."

Mrs. Evelyn then informed Roſina of the converſation that had paſſed before Sir Gregory and Mrs. Grubton, and that which had in conſequence ſucceeded it, between Lord Raymond and herſelf; but ſtrongly pre poſſeſſed with the idea, that Lord Raymond wiſhed her to conſent to a clandeſtine marriage, ſhe imputed whatever appeared ſuſpicious in his conduct, to his deſire of impoſing on Mrs. Evelyn, whom he might reaſonably apprehend would think herſelf obliged to acquaint his father with his intentions, ſhould ſhe, by any accident, arrive at the knowledge of them. But however foreign to his heart the terms in which he had mentioned her might have been, ſhe felt herſelf deeply hurt and mortified at their indelicacy. She readily promiſed a compliance with Mrs. Evelyn's plan, of which, though it might be painful to her feelings, ſhe acknowledged the propriety.

Before

Before Mrs. Evelyn parted from Roſina, ſhe made her many profeſſions of eſteem and protection.

"I cannot, (ſaid ſhe) with any propriety offer you an aſylum in my houſe whilſt Lord Raymond remains in it; but I think he cannot delay his departure much longer. When he is gone, I ſhall expect to be choſen your protectreſs, until you are claimed by your friends; and nothing will ſo greatly contribute to diſcountenance the idle tales that have been repeated to your diſadvantage, as your continuing to reſide for ſome time in my houſe, and my writing to your benefactreſs in your vindication. Meantime be aſſured, when I am convinced that Lord Raymond's views are honourable, you will find me as earneſt to promote, as I am now ſolicitous to diſcourage them."

Roſina poured out her warm acknowledgements to Mrs. Evelyn, and they ſeparated with ſentiments of compaſſion and admiration on one ſide, and of the warmeſt gratitude and eſteem on the other.

The doubts which Roſina's partiality had at firſt refuſed to conſider as admiſſible, now returned to her mind; and though her heart denied its aſſent to

to the validity of proof no more than preſumptive, her reaſon enforced the neceſſity of a trial, which might either clear the innocence of Lord Raymond, or aſcertain his guilt. She determined to exert all her reſolution—ſilence the ſcruples of her delicacy; probe his heart to the quick; and if ſhe found one corrupted ſpot in it, baniſh him from her ſight, and exile him from her own for ever; hope, however, ſtill predominated, and ſhe rejoiced in the acquiſition of ſo valuable a friend as Mrs. Evelyn.

## CHAP. XVIII.

### DISSIMULATION UNMASKED.

LORD Raymond had been engaged to ſpend that day at the ſeat of a gentleman in the neighbourhood, and Mrs. Evelyn had ſeized the opportunity which his abſence afforded, of viſiting Roſina ſecretly. It was late in the evening before he could diſengage himſelf. In his return he ſent his

his ſervant home with his horſe, and went alone to the cottage. Roſina perceived, as ſoon as he entered the parlour where ſhe ſet, that he had deviated from that ſtrict ſobriety, which ſince his reſidence in Wales, his health had obliged him to adhere to, and her heart whiſpered her, that this was the moment to make the trial ſhe meditated.

In Lord Raymond's manner of addreſſing her, there was more fondneſs, but leſs reſpect than uſual. He enquired whether ſhe had not received an anſwer from Mrs. Fitzoſborne, and on being anſwered in the negative;

"Nor ever will, (ſaid he) it is evident that theſe Fitzoſborne's ſeek nothing but a pretence to throw you off; yet I ſuppoſe you ſtill perſevere in your deſign of begging to be admitted as an humble dependant on the bounty of that worthleſs and purſe-proud race, who deſpiſe and ſcorn you."

"Where elſe can I go to?" ſaid Roſina, ſtruggling with the emotion his words had excited.

"Where elſe! (ſaid Lord Raymond) have you then no alternative! have you not acknowledged your tenderneſs for me?"

"And

"And I have not retracted that avowal," ſaid Roſina.

"What avails the acknowledgement of an affection, (returned Lord Raymond) of which you could never yet be perſuaded to give me any other proof."

"I have not denied you any proof that conſiſted with propriety, (ſaid Roſina) nay, I have greatly exceeded it's bounds, in confeſſing a partiality for a man in a ſituation ſuch as yours. But let us be more explicit; what further proof do you require?"

Lord Raymond heſitated at this queſtion. Now that Mrs. Fitzoſborne had diſcovered the place of Roſina's concealment, he was in hourly apprehenſion, leſt the zeal of her friendſhip ſhould induce her to come herſelf in purſuit of her; and conſcious that the arrival of that lady would put a final period to all his hopes, he imagined, that in a ſituation ſo critical, a deciſive ſtroke was abſolutely neceſſary.

"There is a proof of tenderneſs, Roſina, (ſaid he) which, eſſential as it is to my peace, I yet dread to require of you. I can no longer amuſe the

the impatience of my father with vain pretences—within two days I muſt be gone."

"Well, (ſaid Roſina) and what then?"

"What then, Roſina! Can you have ſo little ſenſibility—ſo little regard to the happineſs of the man by whom you are ſo fondly, ſo faithfully beloved, as to ſuffer him to depart alone."

Roſina, mindful of the councils with which the prudence of Mrs. Evelyn had ſupplied her, repreſſed the denial that hung on her lips.

"What tie have you now to this place, (purſued Lord Raymond) without money, without friends, ſubjected to inconvenience, expoſed to inſult, deſpiſed and abandoned by theſe Fitzoſborne's—yet how can I eſtimate your tenderneſs, when ſuch a ſituation is preferred to the arms of the man who adores you!"

Though Roſina continued immoveably ſteadfaſt to her purpoſe of returning to Ireland, yet ſtill eagerly ſolicitous to read the bottom of his heart, and deſirous to encourage him to an explicit avowal of its latent purpoſes, ſhe ſuffered him to proceed

ceed without interruption; whilſt with the trembling anxiety of mingled hope and fear, ſhe liſtened to his words, which, as they were ſtill equivocal, ſhe was inclined to interpret in the ſenſe moſt favourable to her wiſhes.

"Will you then conſent to leave this place, Roſina? (ſaid Lord Raymond, ardently preſſing her hands) will you conſent to accompany me to London—will you be mine?"

"I had reſolved, (ſaid Roſina, who whilſt ſhe trembled with the apprehenſion of finding him guilty, determined to perſevere in a ſcrutiny ſo important to her future peace; and lead him on to the diſcovery of his views, by an aſſumed compliance) I had reſolved to enter into no engagement without the conſent of Mrs. Fitzoſborne—but ſituated as I now find myſelf,"——

"Then you conſent to my wiſhes, my deareſt, lovelieſt Roſina!"

"Hold, my Lord, (ſaid Roſina) moderate your tranſports; I cannot conſent to a plan, of which I am yet ignorant of the nature."

"The nature, (ſaid he, heſitating and embarraſſed) Let us firſt execute our project, my charming friend (continued he) reſuming his gaiety) and leave dull deliberation to a future hour—at preſent I am totally unfit for it. I am delighted with your condeſcenſion—I am enchanted with your beauty. Why ſhould we loſe an hour of the exquiſite felicity that awaits us. Let us depart to-morrow."

"But to depart (ſaid Roſina) under the protection of a man who is not my huſband!"

Lord Raymond's countenance changed at the term.

"You know my ſituation, Roſina, (ſaid he, after a ſilence of ſome minutes) as I cannot publickly offer you my hand, I think it would be unfair, ungenerous, to take advantage of your preſent perplexed circumſtances, to involve, to entangle you—in fine to enſnare you into any engagements that—might be a ſource of difficulty in future."

Language ſuch as this, one would imagine, admitted not of miſinterpretation; yet to Roſina, a novice in the black ſcience of human iniquity, pure, innocent and unſuſpicious, the guilt of ſuch a

ſeduction appeared ſo atrocious, that ſhe could not yet perſuade herſelf it was meditated by Lord Raymond; by the man ſhe had looked up to as her friend and her adviſer; the man whoſe virtues ſhe had ſo partially magnified, and on whoſe honour and tenderneſs ſhe had ſo implicitly relied. Though his language was equivocal, his intentions ſhe fancied might be innocent. He might aim at nothing more than to conduct her to ſome retreat, where he might at intervals enjoy her ſociety, until ſome fortunate revolution in his affairs ſhould enable him to give her more open and public teſtimonies of his attachment. But the hope which ſhe was thus unwilling to forego, was now faint and wavering, and more than counter-balanced by ſuſpicion; but a ſtrongly intereſted curioſity gave her ſpirits to perſevere in her innocent diſſimulation. Whilſt ſhe forcibly repreſſed the emotions of her heart, he was at once ſurpriſed and encouraged by her aſſumed gentleneſs.

"But, (ſaid Roſina) the ſtep you wiſh me to take, would appear ſo ſtrange, ſo unuſual, that,—"

"My lovely Roſina, (cried he, whilſt the wine he had drank, conſpired with the idea of the victory he fancied himſelf on the point of obtaining, to

elate him to an unuſual pitch of triumphant exultation. How vain are the ſacrifices which we daily offer on the altar of that idol, cuſtom; which with a blind perverſeneſs, we have ourſelves erected, and whoſe fetters we bear with a mean and voluntary ſervility! "Take nature's path and mad opinion's leave," ſays our favourite philoſopher; let us then, my Roſina, leaving the blind and frantic multitude, to barter eſſential and permanent happineſs, for an empty ſound—an echo—a bubble that burſts even whilſt they graſp it; let us purſue the path of nature, unfettered by the galling yoke of ſelf-inflicted obligation; and whilſt in the reciprocation of tenderneſs we find the ſecret of felicity, laugh at the ſuperſtitions and prejudices of the deluded idolaters."

Roſina's blood ran cold at this ſpeech—yet ſtill diſſembling her horror and indignation, "I now, (ſaid ſhe, in a tremulous accent) "begin to conceive the nature of your ſcheme."

"And will you then, with a generous reliance on my honour, accept of my offered protection?"

"Honour! (repeated Roſina to herſelf) ah, traitor! I am endeavouring, (ſaid ſhe in a voice that

that beſpoke her emotion) I am endeavouring to think of it with patience. But ſhould this project take place, what is to become of Lady Elinor?"

"O name her not, (cried Lord Raymond) damp not the felicity of my boſom, by recalling to it a remembrance ſo hateful! yet were you deſirous of perpetuating your conqueſt, of making my heart eternally your own, you would wiſh me to marry her."

"I wiſh you to marry Lady Elinor!"

"O yes, Roſina! with what inexpreſſible rapture ſhould I fly to your boſom from the deteſtable ſociety of that little monſter of deformity! with what augmented brilliancy would your lovelineſs appear, when contraſted with the idea of an object ſo hideous! let Lady Elinor poſſeſs the only diſtinction ſhe is capable of aſpiring to; let her enjoy the ſplendor of my rank—your's ſhall be the command of my fortune—the empire of my heart; your reign ſhall be triumphant, and my allegiance voluntary."

Whilſt Roſina ſhuddered with horror at the baſeneſs of Lord Raymond's heart, thus plainly reveal-

ed to her inſpection, he fancied he beheld in her emotion, the laſt faint ſtruggles of expiring virtue.

"Say, my Roſina, (continued the deceiver) you who are diveſted of the prejudices of unenlightened minds—what union can be permanent and durable—bliſsful on earth, and holy in the ſight of heaven, but that which is formed by the ſacred ſympathies of congenial ſouls. O hallowed and delightful ties—enchanting bonds, that lead in voluntary captivity each ſoft affection of the heart; how much ſuperior to that ſlaviſh nuptial yoke, which binds in unwilling thraldom the ſlaves whoſe ſouls revolt againſt the tyranny, and murmur at the fetters they are unable to throw off?"

But what avails it to repeat the ſophiſticated rhetoric with which the betrayer endeavoured to warp from the paths of rectitude, the unguided footſteps of the innocent Roſina, to ſtain her boſom with infamy, and pierce it with conſcious guilt—how often his deceitful lips dared to profane the names of holineſs and honour, and with bold preſumption, invoke the immortal powers to witneſs the purity of a heart, that glowed at that inſtant with unhallowed paſſion!

Whilſt

Whilſt Lord Raymond uttered theſe effuſions, Roſina ſat with her face covered with her handkerchief, and her head reclined on the back of her chair. He rapturouſly preſſed her hand to his lips, and ſhe attempted not to withdraw them.

"I have prevailed," (ſaid he in a tranſport of joy—ſuch joy as wicked breaſts can feel; Roſina the lovely miſtreſs—the delightful friend is mine! O what years of happineſs await me! love twines for me his brighteſt wreaths—no angry nuptial thorns lurk beneath his roſes!

Emboldened by Roſina's paſſiveneſs, he threw his arms around her, and gently drew her towards him: her head ſunk on his ſhoulder; he preſſed his face to her's, but it was cold—cold as the grave! he ſtarted, he gazed at her, and thought he beheld a corpſe in his arms; ſo chill, ſo pallid, ſo ghaſtly was that countenance, which but a few minutes before had been animated by the glow of youth, and brightened by the beam of vivacity. He cried aloud, Auſtin came to him; but the view of the pale and motionleſs Roſina, almoſt deprived him of ſenſation. Rord Raymond raiſed her in his arms, and carried her to her chamber; they laid her on her bed, and ſprinkled her with water; ſhe opened

her eyes, and perceiving Lord Raymond, who knelt at her bedſide, a little tranſcient glow of reſentment fluſhed her cheek.

"Go, go!" ſaid ſhe, withdrawing her hand which he held, and turning away her face.

"Roſina, (cried Lord Raymond, in a real agony of vexation) I cannot leave you! by heaven I adore you! forgive the raſh ſallies of an intemperate paſſion—I love you Roſina—more than my own ſoul I love you!"

"And with the ſame affection too, (replied Roſina, faintly ſmiling) for you would deſtroy us both."

Lord Raymond, notwithſtanding his effrontery, was ſtruck dumb.

"But, (reſumed Roſina) I conceive not the paſſion which you call love! true love ſeeks the felicity, not the deſtruction of its object; and, equal to every generous ſacrifice, would ſecure that felicity, even by the privation of its own. Oh how much could I have ſuffered, rather than have given you

you pain! I could ſay much, very much, but I am faint and feeble—pray leave me!"

Roſina, will nothing melt that inexorable boſom! behold my deſpair, my penitence, my tears!"

"You have tears, then, (ſaid Roſina, turning to look at him) and ſo, they ſay, have the crocodile and the hyenna."

"O with what coldneſs (cried Lord Raymond) you ſtab me to the heart! I cannot bear this calmneſs. Treat me with ſcorn, with anger, with reproach—I deſerve it, I can bear it all; but this provoking coldneſs! rather would I hear you pour curſes and execrations on the wretch who ſuffered a tranſport of paſſion—a momentary tranſport—to ſuſpend the better dictates of his reaſon!"

"No, my Lord, no curſes or revilings ſhall paſs my lips; you are no longer my enemy, for you have loſt the power to injure me. Pray leave me; my head is much diſturbed. Merciful heaven! is this a horrid dream! oh, no, no! I ſlumbered in a vain ſecurity; I fancied myſelf the object of a tenderneſs as ſpotleſs—as fervent as my own; but the viſion is now diſſipated—fraud and treachery have

dropped the veil—averſion ſucceeds to fondneſs, and horror to hope!"

"Then you ſcorn, you deteſt me!"

"I ſhudder (ſaid Roſina) at your preſence—my blood runs cold when you approach me! yet wherefore ſhould I dread the ſerpent that has loſt its ſting! O Fitzoſborne! is this then the man to whom the tenderneſs of that noble boſom has been ſacrificed!"

"Is this to be endured! (cried Lord Raymond, ſtung with jealous rage at this apoſtrophe to his rival) never Roſina, ſhall Fitzoſborne call you his."

"Ere now (ſaid Roſina) he has ceaſed to deſire it; thanks to the ſtigma you were yourſelf the firſt to fix on my reputation."

Struck with the juſtice of this accuſation, Lord Raymond attempted not to reply to it.

"But, (ſaid Roſina) I forgive you, and ſo, I hope will heaven: pray leave me; this I hope and truſt is the laſt time we ſhall ever meet.

Lord

Lord Raymond, in a real agony, now poured out a thouſand paſſionate effuſions; but Roſina turned from him, and uttered not a word. Old Auſtin, who had been an aſtoniſhed ſpectator of the foregoing ſcene, perceiving that his preſence was hateful to Roſina, compelled him to leave her. He ruſhed out of the cottage in a tranſport of vexation and diſappointment, inwardly execrating her obſtinacy and his own folly, in having, as he imagined, prematurely revealed his deſigns.

But that fortitude; that ſpirit of injured and indignant virtue, which had ſupplied Roſina with a temporary calmneſs, and enabled her to treat, with becoming ſcorn, the conceſſions of a betrayer, and drive him with contemptuous coldneſs, from her preſence, ſubſided the inſtant he was withdrawn, and gave place to a keenneſs of ſenſation, an agony of diſtreſs, little ſhort of deſperation. Separate from her friends, and apparently deſpiſed and neglected by them—cruelly deceived by him, on whom her ſuſceptible heart had laviſhed its innocent and unſuſpicious tenderneſs—forlorn—unfriended—her reputation blaſted—her reſources exhauſted; her ideas wandered with a gloomy and perturbed wildneſs, from one diſtreſsful ſubject to another; but above all, the perfidy of Lord Raymond rankled in

her heart like a poiſoned arrow, and wrung her boſom with anguiſh almoſt intolerable

## CHAP. XIX.

### A MARVELLOUS ADVENTURE.

Swift on his downy pinions flies from woe,
And lights on lids unſullied with a tear!

"BLESSED, (ſaith Sancho Panza) be the man who firſt invented ſleep!" Bleſſed, thrice bleſſed be the power whoſe benevolence ſupplied this ſweet, though tranſitory oblivion, to human ſolicitude. Where this kind reſtorative of nature diſpenſes its balmy bleſſings, how ſoft and refreſhing are the hours of darkneſs; but how reſtleſs and how thorny is the couch from whence it is baniſhed by diſquietude; how tedious and dreary are

are thoſe hours of more than midnight horror, when the gloomy ſtillneſs of nature ſeems to conſpire with the pangs of intellectual miſery, to depreſs the mind with a ſtill heavier deſpondency. In thoſe devoted moments, deſpair ſeems to reign triumphant over the ſoul; no ray of hope pierces the melancholy ſhadows; imagination ceaſes her antic frolicks; fancy drops her magic pencil, or preſents to the jaundiced ſight diſtorted chimeras, and horrid forms of human miſery; of miſery, which earneſt in ſolicitude, calls on the meagre form of death, and becomes enamoured of the ghaſtly ſpectre. To ſuch hours, Roſina had been till now a ſtranger; unhappineſs ſhe had known, but not the extreme of wretchedneſs.

Early next morning ſhe received a letter from Lord Raymond, which ſhe immediately returned unopened, in a cover that contained theſe lines.

ROSINA TO LORD RAYMOND.

AS the encloſed letter can contain nothing, either to intereſt my attention, or to excite my curioſity, you will not wonder that I ſhould return it unopened. Reſerve your artful eloquence for thoſe whom it may inſpire with admiration; in my boſom it

it can awaken no feelings but contempt. I may be pardoned for an error that reſulted from the ſimple reliance of inexperienced credulity, but voluntary communication with the betrayer, who would have enſnared my innocence, would argue either a hopeleſs folly, or a confirmed depravity. Let this, then, be the final period of our correſpondence; nor imagine, that in thus eternally renouncing you, I ſacrifice to my offended honour the ſecret feelings of my boſom: no, my Lord, my tenderneſs vaniſhed with the imaginary virtues to which it owed its exiſtence. Farewell, then, and if hereafter a pang of contrition ſhould ariſe in your boſom to avenge my wrongs, let it be mitigated by the reflection, that you have injured my peace almoſt as little as my honour; for be aſſured, Roſina is not ſo weak as to dwell with fond regret on the idea of the man, whom from her ſoul ſhe deſpiſes!

After this letter was diſpatched, Roſina wrote privately to Mrs. Evelyn, acquainting her, in a few words, with the full diſcovery ſhe had made of the baſeneſs of Lord Raymond, and gratefully acknowledging the benevolence which had ſupplied her with lights to penetrate the black deſigns he had harboured againſt her. The only tie which bound her to her preſent ſituation, was now broken, and had

had ſhe followed the ſtrong impulſes of her heart, ſhe would have ſet out immediately for Ireland; but after the kind and generous interpoſition of Mrs. Evelyn, ſhe judged it would be ungrateful, as well as unwiſe, to take a ſtep of that conſequence, without previouſly conſulting her; and ſhe imagined that the letter which that lady had propoſed to write to Mrs. Fitzoſborne in her vindication, would exceedingly contribute to ſmooth the difficulties which obſtructed this meaſure; difficulties, which ſhe now plainly perceived, had been aggravated, as well as enforced, by the intereſted ſubtilty of Lord Raymond.

She paſſed that tedious day in a melancholy retirement. Mr. Lewis, who was now tolerably recovered, called at the cottage, but Auſtin had inſtructions to acquaint any perſon who ſhould inquire for Roſina, except Mrs. Evelyn, that ſhe was ill, and had gone to take ſome repoſe.

In the duſk of the evening a boy came to acquaint Auſtin, that a friend deſired to ſpeak with him at the neighbouring inn. This circumſtance, trifling as it was, arouſed Roſina's hopes; ſhe fancied the meſſage muſt relate to her, and earneſtly beſought him to return to her without delay. He had

had not been gone a quarter of an hour, when her female ſervant came to inform her, that a man who held a horſe at the gate of the farm-yard, enquired for her, and ſaid he had a letter, which he had been forbidden to deliver into any hands except her own. Convinced that this ſtranger could be no other than a courier from Mrs. Fitzoſborne, Roſina ſcarcely waited 'till the girl had finiſhed her meſſage; ſhe flew in eager expectation to the gate, where ſhe hoped ſhe ſhould recogniſe in the meſſenger one of the domeſtics who were formerly known to her. She found the man waiting for her at the gate, but the darkneſs of the approaching night prevented her from diſtinguiſhing his features.

"You have a letter for me, (ſaid ſhe) from whom do you bring it?"

"My buſineſs is with Roſina, the gardener's daughter, (ſaid the man) are you ſhe?"

"I am, I am, (ſaid Roſina) give me the letter."

"Since that's the caſe, (cried the man) our buſineſs will ſoon be diſpatched."

As

As he ſpoke, he gave a whiſtle ſo loud and ſhrill, that it ſtruck a ſudden terror to the fainting heart of Roſina. The ſignal was inſtantly obeyed; four men ruſhed from behind an adjacent hedge, and ſeizing Roſina, dragged her, almoſt dead with horror and aſtoniſhment, acroſs an adjoining meadow, at the end of which ran a bye lane, where a chaiſe and four waited for them. They hurried her into the carriage, and the man who had firſt ſpoke to her, placed himſelf beſide her, put one arm round her, and with the other hand ſtopped her mouth, to prevent her from alarming the neighbouring village with her cries, as they drove rapidly through it. An unneceſſary precaution, for terror had deprived her of ſenſe and motion; ſhe continued near an hour in a ſwoon. On awaking from her inſenſibility, ſhe became conſcious of all the horrors of her ſituation. They paſſed, as ſhe could perceive by the light of the moon, through a deep, dark glen, through which, the roughneſs of the road obliged them to travel ſlowly and with precaution. Roſina ſcreamed aloud, but her cry, reverberated by the ſurrounding mountains, and repeated by the ſhrill and piercing echoes, returning to her own ears, augmented her terror and diſmay.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XX.

### NEW WONDERS.

"AYE," (cried the man who ſtill held her in his arms) you may ſqueak and ſquall as much as you pleaſe: we have you ſafe enough now, the devil a living thing can hear you, except the ravens and ſcreech owls, and they'll like you the better for joining their concert."

"Merciful heaven! (cried Roſina) to what am I deſtined! oh, if your boſom retains one ſentiment of humanity, I conjure you to compaſſionate me!"

"Not I, by my ſoul, (cried the fellow with the ſame brutal inſenſibility) I think you are very well off, if you knew but all. It's enough to make one laugh

laugh to hear a gardener's daughter bewailing herſelf like a tragedy queen; and talking about her deſtiny and compaſſion!"

"You have been deceived, (ſaid Roſina) I am not what I appear. Oh, if gold can bribe you to be honeſt, ſet me but at liberty, and depend on a recompenſe beyond your moſt ſanguine expectations!"

"Gold! (repeated the ruffian with a ſneer) I wonder how it comes to be ſo plenty with you on a ſudden. I ſuppoſe your old father has made a fine hand of his cabbages and cauliflowers, that you talk ſo big about the ſtrength of your pockets."

"I expect not aſſiſtance from Auſtin, (ſaid Roſina) I have reſources which you dream not of."

"Humph, (returned the fellow) if I don't dream of them, I believe you do."

"It's true, (reſumed Roſina) I have no money about me, but ſet me at liberty, and I will give you my note for a hundred guineas."

"Your

"Your note! and who the devil will diſcount it for me?"

"The lady on whom I will draw it, will diſcharge it on ſight."

"And pray where is that lady to be found?"

"She reſides in Ireland, and——"

"In Ireland! (interrupted the fellow) aye, aye, cows far off have long horns; a fine gooſe chaſe you'd ſend me on! but if you are for paſſing raps, my girl, you have got the wrong ſow by the ear. But it is my opinion, that the fright has turned your brain, and ſet your tongue running at this nonſenſical rate."

"Your employer, (ſaid Roſina, indignantly) baſe as he is, never commiſſioned you to treat me with this indecent rudeneſs."

"Faith, (returned the man) he gave me no charge about you, one way or the other; I believe he does not much trouble his head about how I treat you—he has other fiſh to fry. But at preſent I am

I am deviliſhly tired, ſo I beg you will give your tongue a holiday for a while, and let me take a nap."

Roſina, who was now totally hopeleſs of making any impreſſion on the mind of her ſavage conductor, no longer felt the leaſt inclination to interrupt his repoſe: he leaned his head againſt the oppoſite ſide of the carriage, and fell into a deep ſleep. This circumſtance ſuggeſted to Roſina the poſſibility of an eſcape, but on looking out, ſhe was inſtantly convinced that the ſcheme was impracticable, as the carriage was ſurrounded by horſemen.

The ſlumbers of her brutal companion, which continued all night without interruption, allowed her ample leiſure for reflection. From all the circumſtances of her laſt converſation with Lord Raymond, ſhe could not entertain a doubt that ſhe had been thus decoyed and carried off at his inſtigation. He had vowed the preceding evening, that ſhe ſhould never be Fitzoſborne's, and ſhe naturally ſuppoſed that he had recourſe to this violent meaſure, to prevent a union, which he might imagine would take place on the diſcovery of her innocence, and the full conviction of his own baſeneſs.

Great

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The ſlumbers of her brutal companion, which continued all night without interruption, allowed her ample leiſure for reflection. From all the circumſtances of her laſt converſation with Lord Raymond, ſhe could not entertain a doubt that ſhe had been thus decoyed and carried off at his inſtigation. He had vowed the preceding evening, that ſhe ſhould never be Fitzoſborne's, and ſhe naturally ſuppoſed that he had recourſe to this violent meaſure, to prevent a union, which he might imagine would take place on the diſcovery of her innocence, and the full conviction of his own baſeneſs.

Great

Great as were her horror and conſternation, they were even ſurpaſſed by her reſentment. She already, in idea, beheld Lord Raymond kneeling at her feet, and endeavouring, by penitence and ſubmiſſion, to deprecate her juſtly incurred indignation; ſhe framed in her own mind a thouſand ſevere and poignant reproaches, and doubted not, that in the end, her inflexible ſeverity and confirmed averſion, would convince him of the folly of his enterprize, and induce him to ſet her at liberty.

In ſuch reflections Roſina paſſed the hours, until the firſt rays of the ſun, darting on the eyes of her ſavage conductor, awoke him from his ſlumbers.

"I little thought, (ſaid he, ſcowling at Roſina) what a pretty girl I was ſleeping beſide all night."

Roſina look'd at him, and beheld a countenance half brute, half human; a countenance in which the ſurlineſs of the bull-dog, and the ſenſuality of the ſwine, ſeemed to be compounded with the cunning of the fox. She averted her eyes with horror and diſguſt. That ſuch a perſon ſhould have been employed as the conductor of ſuch a buſineſs, did not ſurpriſe her; but ſhe was aſtoniſhed that Lord Raymond

Raymond ſhould ſo far forget the conſideration that was due to her, as to omit giving orders that ſhe ſhould be treated with decency and reſpect: ſhe was however inclined to attribute this negligence to the forgetfulneſs of hurry, and the perturbation of paſſion.

They ſoon ſtopped to bait the horſes and refreſh themſelves, at a ſolitary houſe on the ſide of a barren and unfrequented mountain. There was no one in this houſe but an old man and woman, and ſome children, but they underſtood not a ſentence of Engliſh, which precluded the poſſibility of Roſina's intereſting their compaſſion; though had communication been practicable, ſhe was conſcious, that watched and guarded as ſhe was, it could have availed but little. They got breakfaſt for her, and ſhe endeavoured to eat, for ſhe feared that by faſting ſhe ſhould exhauſt her ſpirits, and incapacitate herſelf for treating Lord Raymond, when ſhe met him, with all the contempt and indignation which he merited.

The repaſt finiſhed, they purſued their journey: they travelled through unfrequented roads, ſurrounded by wild and deſert mountains. Once again in the courſe of that day they ſtopped to bait, and

Roſina,

Roſina, convinced of the impoſſibility of eſcape, made not the ſlighteſt attempt to regain her liberty, but ſuffered herſelf to be conducted without effort or remonſtrance. The evening was dark and tempeſtuous, and they travelled amidſt mountains and precipices, which hung threatening above their heads with a terrifying gloom. The man who ſtill occupied his ſtation in the carriage, and who had ſlept almoſt all the journey, now awoke.

"What a deviliſh long way this is! (cried he, rubbing his eyes and looking out) but I believe we are almoſt at the end of our journey. Aye, yonder are the old towers that I was told of—Why don't you look out and reconnoitre your place of abode—and a damned diſmal hole it ſeems to be! I am afraid you will be deviliſhly troubled with the hips, when you are coop'd up in it."

Roſina looked out, and the duſky gloom of the evening juſt allowed her to obſerve the ſhattered remains of an old fortification which ſtood at the bottom of a mountain, at the diſtance of a quarter of a mile; her heart ſhrunk with horror at the view of the dreary and diſmantled abode which was deſtined to be her future reſidence. When they reached the outward walls, the looſe ſtones, and heaps

heaps of rubbiſh that had fallen from the building, impeded the progreſs of the carriage, and obliged Roſina to alight, and walk acroſs the inner court. In the wide and gloomy hall of this ruinated habitation, ſhe was met by an old woman, and a ſmart looking young man in livery, who told the men who conducted Roſina, that his maſter had given orders that the young woman ſhould be brought to him as ſoon as ſhe arrived. Anger at this diſreſpectful treatment, mitigated the keenneſs of the ſenſations which had darted through Roſina's boſom, at the idea of her approaching interview with Lord Raymond, and revived her exhauſted ſpirits. They led her up ſeveral flights of narrow winding ſtairs to a long gallery, at the end of which were the only few apartments which now remained habitable. As ſhe advanced with ſlow and tottering ſteps along the gallery, ſhe perceived that the door of the room, which was exactly at the end of it, lay open; there were lights burning on a table, at which was ſeated a perſon, whom ſhe ſuppoſed to be Lord Raymond; he held a news paper before his face, which he ſeemed to read with great attention. Aſtoniſhed at this unfeeling inſenſibility, Roſina averted her eyes from him as ſhe entered the room. He threw the paper on the table, and haſtily riſing, advanced to meet her, and ſeizing her reluctant

hands, exclaimed, "Welcome, fair nymph, to this enchanted caſtle." Roſina turned in amazement at the ſound of his voice, and beheld a perſon to whom ſhe was an utter ſtranger.

"With what aſtoniſhment ſhe gazes at me, (cried he) whom did you expect to ſee!"

"Another perſon," ſaid Roſina.

"What other perſon?" aſked the ſtranger.

"To you ſir, (ſaid Roſina, to whom it inſtantly occurred that this perſon was ſome profligate companion of Lord Raymond, whom he had made the confident of his enterprize, and on whom he had probably devolved its execution, "to you, ſir, ſuch information would be unneceſſary."

"Well, well, (ſaid the ſtranger) we ſhall talk of theſe matters hereafter; for the preſent ſit down and take ſome refreſhment; I have heard much of the faſcination of your charms (continued he, gazing confidently at her) and I find report has not exaggerated them. You are a beautiful girl, and merit the honour of being the heroine of ſuch a fine adventure as this."

A ſpecies

A ſpecies of treatment, for which Roſina was ſo little prepared, diſconcerted, as greatly as it aſtoniſhed her: ſhe could never have expected from the perſons whom ſhe ſuppoſed to be the agents of Lord Raymond, this rude and diſreſpectful familiarity, from which his own manners were ſo widely remote.

"Pray ſeat yourſelf, (reſumed the ſtranger, who was a genteel looking man about five and thirty) and let me have the pleaſure of helping you to a glaſs of wine. You appear to be fatigued and agitated. I hope our myrmidons have treated you with all due reſpect?"

"Reſpect! (exclaimed Roſina) with ſuch reſpect as might be expected from monſters, who could aſſiſt in ſo infamous a tranſaction!"

"And am I too to be ſtyled a monſter, (returned he, laughing) becauſe I am an abettor in this buſineſs?"

"You condemn yourſelf by the acknowledgement,' ſaid Roſina.

"And do you know by whoſe inſtigation you have been carried away?"

"By Lord Raymond's, (returned Roſina) I know too well."

"What a little witch! (cried the ſtranger, laughing) and you are doubtleſs greatly diſappointed at not finding him here to receive you. But now tell me candidly, my princeſs, (continued he, approaching her, and forcibly taking both her hands) as charming as you are, can you think it becomes the head of a little gardener's daughter to run wandering after a coronet."

"It is inhuman (ſaid Roſina, burſting into tears) thus to aggravate with deriſion, ſufferings already intolerable."

"Come, come, (replied he) you muſt wipe away thoſe tears and forgive me. Lord Raymond deſired me to preſent his moſt humble reſpects to you, and aſſure you that he is moſt deſperately chagrined at his inability to pay his perſonal devoirs to you at the preſent period. In the meantime he entreats you to conſider me as his proxy, and treat me

me with the ſame kindneſs and indulgence you would ſhew to himſelf."

"I willingly agree to it," ſaid Roſina.

"Why this is well; and will you indeed diveſt yourſelf of this diſagreeable melancholy, and treat me with ſome conſideration."

"Yes, (returned Roſina) with ſuch conſideration as is merited by the infamous emiſſary of a deteſtable principal!"

"Ha! (cried the ſtranger) you are a girl of ſpirit, I find. You have really a very pretty knack at ſcolding, conſidering you are only a gardener's daughter. And pray, my little heroine, are you acquainted with Lord Raymond's motives for thus whiſking you away, and immuring you in this ſtrong hold?"

"I can conjecture them but too well; had I voluntarily complied with his baſely diſhonourable requiſitions, this violence would have been unneceſſary."

"So you refuſed to capitulate on any but honourable terms, in the vain imagination that thoſe all-ſubduing charms of your's muſt finally bend his Lordſhip's ſpirit to the matrimonial yoke; and were it not for the diſparity of birth and fortune, and the intervention of a certain little lady of quality, as rich in the gifts of fortune as ſhe is deficient in thoſe of nature, your ſcheme might poſſibly have been accompliſhed."

"Lord Raymond (ſaid Roſina) has confided in you but partially; had he been more explicit in his communication, I might have been viewed with compaſſion by thoſe who now think themſelves authorized to treat me with ridicule and reproach."

"Well, (ſaid the ſtranger) do you atone for his deficiencies, and tell me all about the perfidy of this diſcourteous knight, for whom you profeſs ſo violent an averſion, and on whoſe account you have already treated me ſo ſcurvily. I promiſe you will find me diſpoſed to liſten to your diſaſtrous tale with all imaginable ſympathy and tenderneſs. Do, now, make me your confident; you can't conceive what a diſcreet one you'll find me."

"This

"This raillery is cruelly miſplaced; (ſaid Roſina) my wretchedneſs requires no augmentation. I am ill—pray order me ſome water."

"Forgive me, (ſaid the ſtranger) I have been to blame in thus teazing you. You are ill indeed, (continued he, obſerving the deadly paleneſs that ſucceeded to the glow of indignation which at firſt had animated her countenance) how you ſhudder! for God's ſake diſpel theſe groundleſs terrors! I pledge you my honour you have nothing worſe to apprehend than a temporary confinement."

To theſe aſſurances he added many others: but Roſina heard them not; her curioſity and her indignation had hitherto ſupported her ſtrength, but now, harraſſed by vexation, and overcome by fatigue, it totally abandoned her, and the ſtranger had ſcarcely time to prevent her from falling on the floor.

On her recovery ſhe found herſelf laid on a bed in another apartment, and ſurrounded by the ſtranger, the old woman, and ſome other ſervants.

"Thank heaven you are alive once more, (cried the ſtranger) my ſweet girl compoſe your-

ſelf and fear nothing: I fear thoſe dogs, to whoſe charge you were committed, have hurried and terrified you more than was neceſſary; they are an infernal crew, and had I known you ſooner, you ſhould never have fallen into their power; but be aſſured, not one of them ſhall ever more approach you."

Roſina felt ſome conſolation from theſe aſſurances, and ſtill more relief from her tears, which now ſtreamed abundantly. They perſuaded her to ſwallow ſome wine; the ſtranger wanted to leave the old woman to watch by her all night, but as ſhe felt an abhorrence to every perſon around her, ſhe inſiſted ſo poſitively on being left alone, that they at length complied with her deſire, though with evident reluctance.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XXI.

### CONVERSATION AND OTHER MATTERS.

ROSINA no ſooner found herſelf alone, than ſhe flew to the door, but it was lock'd on the outſide. Every evil to which ſhe was expoſed by her ſituation, ruſhed into her mind; ſhe ſunk on a ſeat in a kind of torpid horror. She remained near an hour in this bewildered ſtupefaction, nearly approaching to diſtraction, and often it's forerunner; then ſuddenly ſtarting, as if from a fearful dream, ſhe caſt her eyes wildly around her: it was a large gloomy chamber, hung with old faſhioned, but not ill executed tapeſtry. The curtains of the bed hung in tattered remnants, and the other furniture, which had been for centuries the food of worms, ſeemed ready to crumble into their original atoms on the ſlighteſt touch. She gazed a-

round her in a wild aſtoniſhment, until the light burning down into the ſocket, began to throw its feeble and tremulous gleams on the walls of her dungeon. A group of figures in the tapeſtry caught her attention, and the dying flame juſt then aſpiring with a ſudden glow, revealed it plainly to her view. The figure of Brutus raiſed with uplifted arm the poignard that had pierced Lucretia's breaſt; at his feet lay extended the pale remains of the ſelf-martyred matron, ſurrounded by her Roman friends. A ſudden pang of horror ſhot through the boſom of Roſina, and agonized it with ſenſations, paſt deſcription dreadful. She flew to the window, there was but one, and that a ſmall one in the chamber: ſhe opened it, but perceived that ſhe was at an immenſe diſtance from the ground; ſhe heard the daſhing of waters, and the moon gleaming through the dark clouds with a faint and intermitting light, diſcovered to her a cataract that roared and foamed beneath. The bleſſings of repoſe are not for the wretched: all night ſhe hung at the window, liſtening to the hollow murmurs of the winds, and the fearful ſcreamings of the owls. She earneſtly looked forwards to the return of light, as if the rays of the ſun could diſpel the dreadful gloom of intellectual miſery. The light at length appeared, but its approach was

ſlow and ſullen; no golden beam announced the arrival of the morning; it's gray dawn, however, diſcovered to her view the deſolated waſte that ſurrounded her. The caſtle ſtood in a valley, incloſed on three ſides by mountains, in ſome places crowned with gloomy woods, but compoſed, for the moſt part, of huge maſſes of naked rock; on the fourth, the proſpect opened to an uncultivated waſte of marſhy ground, bounded by diſtant hills. The waters that foamed with fury at the baſe of this time-ſhook and mouldering fabric, ſeemed to ſap it's foundation, and threaten it with immediate ruin; and the eternal miſts that hovered around the neighbouring precipices, added to the proſpect a gloomy and terrifying ſolemnity.

The human heart, formed for ſympathy, can ſympathize even with the inanimate creation: theſe objects ſlowly revealed by the yet dim and imperfect light, tinctured the feelings of Roſina with their own gloomy colour; and a diſmal ſhade of melancholy ſucceeded to the agonizing horrors of the night.

She continued at the window until ſhe heard the door unlocked: the old woman entered, but apparently terrified at the wild and diſordered appear-

ance of Roſina; ſhe uttered an exclamation, and ſuddenly withdrawing, ſhut the door after her. She returned in a few minutes, accompanied by the perſon who was ſuppoſed by Roſina to be maſter of this caſtle. Rofina turned from him, and clung to the window at his approach.

"Why, what a fooliſh girl art thou, (ſaid he) thus to afflict thyſelf for nothing—you have not ſlept all night."

"Slept! (ſaid Roſina) is ſleep for a wretch like me?"

The wild diſtraction that appeared in her eyes as ſhe raiſed them—the tears that flowed from them—the violent tremor that ſhook her frame, ſeemed to inſpire the ſtranger with no leſs aſtoniſhment than compaſſion.

"Is it poſſible, (ſaid he, after a pauſe) that there can have been any miſtake in this buſineſs! Are you not Roſina, the daughter of old Auſtin the gardener?"

"What then?" ſaid Roſina.

"Why,

"Why, then of courſe the favourite of Lord Raymond."

The blood mounted to Roſina's cheeks at the mention of that name.

"O that bluſh; (cried he) that bluſh betrays you!"

"What does it betray?" ſaid Roſina.

"That if the principal were here, you would treat him with more indulgence than him whom you ſuppoſe to be his acceſſary."

"Principal and acceſſary (returned Roſina) are both almoſt equally the objects of my contempt and averſion."

"Indeed, (ſays the ſtranger, laughing) yet if report ſays true, his Lordſhip had no reaſon to accuſe you of cruelty and hatred."

"Nor did I hate him, until by his own ill conduct he merited my averſion."

"How, pray, did he merit it?"

"It

"It is to be preſumed, that you who are his confidant and abettor, need not any information on this ſubject."

"Come, (ſaid he) whilſt this good woman is preparing our breakfaſt, let us go down ſtairs and have a little rational converſation. You ſee I have you here in this fortreſs of mine, as abſolutely in my power as a mouſe in a trap; ſo, my little dear, you will find it more to your advantage to treat me with ſome civility, than to provoke me by ill treatment; and perverſe and contemptuous as you are, I feel a ſtrong inclination to aſſiſt and conſole you."

He took her hand to lead her; and as ſhe felt but too ſenſibly that ſhe was indeed in his power, ſhe thought it beſt to acquieſce quietly.

"If your heart be as cold as your hand, (ſaid he, as they entered the room) it is indeed a very frigid one. Lord Raymond can beſt decide that queſtion. Come, I find I muſt croſs examine you a little: you love Lord Raymond," continued he, fixing his eyes on Roſina's.

"I do not love him," ſaid Roſina.

"Why

"Why then did you admit his viſits?"

"Becauſe I was then unacquainted with his true character—I thought his views were different."

"That is, he cajoled, and made you believe he intended to marry you; but, my little princeſs, how could you take it ſeriouſly into your head, that a man in Lord Raymond's ſtyle of life, could reſolve to unite himſelf to a girl in your's; even allowing your attainments to be ſuperior to your birth, as I plainly perceive they are? truſt me, you will find few Pamela's in real life; and when a man of quality addreſſes a girl ſo greatly his inferior, he always ſuppoſes her poſſeſſed of ſagacity enough to penetrate his real views."

"I perceive, (ſaid Roſina) that the confidence Lord Raymond has placed in you, has been very limitted: I am not the daughter of Auſtin."

How! (ſaid the ſtranger, evidently ſurpriſed) not the daughter of Auſtin! Why, what then are you?"

"If Lord Raymond, (returned Roſina, heſitating, and doubtful whether ſhe ought to diſcover the

the ſecret of her quality) if Lord Raymond, who is acquainted with you, forbore to confide in you, ought not that example to be followed by me, to whom you are an abſolute ſtranger?"

"You are an unaccountable girl! a little ſphynx, and deal in problems and enigmas; but when Lord Raymond waits on you in this enchanted tower, your reſentment will vaniſh at his approach; you will receive him."——

"As the man I deteſt and abhor, (interrupted Roſina) I will drive him from my preſence, ſhould he dare to enter it! as the monſter who has deſtroyed my peace, betrayed my confidence, and blaſted my reputation. O, ſir, (ſhe continued, raiſing to him her eyes ſtreaming with tears) how could you, whoſe manners and appearance at leaſt, beſpeak you a gentleman, how could you become acceſſary to ſo infamous an enterprize! are innocence and honour incompatible with poverty! becauſe an unprotected orphan, was I therefore to be marked as the prey of licentiouſneſs—the victim of ignominy?"

"I have certainly been deceived!" ſaid the ſtranger.

"How

"How deceived, (reſumed Roſina) had I been a wretch capable of deſcending to voluntary diſgrace, the force you employed would have been unneceſſary; I ſhould then have ſeen myſelf the pleaſed inhabitant of a ſplendid dwelling, not a miſerable priſoner in this dreary confinement. Lord Raymond, perhaps, forbears to preſent himſelf before me, in the vain imagination that my reſentment may exhauſt itſelf and ſubſide; but let him not deceive himſelf with the expectation of bending my ſpirit by captivity; every pang that rends my boſom, augments my abhorrence of the author of my ſufferings, and death is leſs dreadful than the idea of ever ſeeing him more.

Her beauty, her diſtreſs, her eloquence, conſpired with the impaſſioned energy of her manner, to ſtrike and affect the ſtranger, who gazed on her with admiration, and liſtened to her with attention.

"But (reſumed ſhe) the injury you have done me is not yet irreparable; reſtore me then, O reſtore me to liberty and peace! I am not the mean and artful creature you have been taught to imagine me. I wiſhed not to enſnare Lord Raymond into an unworthy and diſgraceful connexion. Did I not ſuppoſe you to be ſuperior to the temptation

of

of pecuniary reward, I could allure you with the offer of a recompence, far exceeding your expectation; but if you prefer the nobler tribute of the heart, ſuch ſacrifices as it offers to heaven ſhall be yours; the moſt fervent gratitude, and the ſincereſt veneration!"

"Aſtoniſhing creature! (exclaimed the ſtranger) whatever you are, you are irreſiſtible, and can perſuade me to believe what you pleaſe!"

"Promiſe to liberate me, (ſaid Roſina) and I will with-hold from you no ſecret."

"At preſent I cannot: I, too, have my ſecrets. But of this be aſſured, you are as ſafe in this caſtle, as if encompaſſed within the hallowed walls of a cloiſter. At preſent, buſineſs calls me away; I muſt leave you within this half hour; but if you deſire it, no male creature, not ſo much as a mouſe, if I can avoid it, ſhall profane theſe apartments devoted to your uſe, until my return."

"I do ardently deſire it," ſaid Roſina.

"Then of courſe, if Lord Raymond comes, he is to be denied admittance."

"If

"If I can avoid it, (ſaid Roſina) I will never ſee him more. How ſoon may I expect your return?"

"Will you then wiſh for my return?" ſaid he, catching her hand."

"A wretched captive (returned Roſina) will naturally wiſh for liberty, and I ſhall hope you will return to announce to me its joyful tidings."

"That I cannot yet promiſe you: this is altogether a ſtrange affair—a moſt curious piece of political mechaniſm—wheel within wheel; however, as the grand ſpring is not actuated at my pleaſure, I have it not at my option to throw open the doors of your priſon, as my inclination would lead me to do. However, in my own vindication I muſt aver, that I am no vile inſtrument of the infamous deſigns of Lord Raymond, as appearances naturally induce you to ſuppoſe. And now, will you gratify my curioſity, and tell me who and what you are."

Roſina, who was weak and dejected to the laſt degree, entreated that ſhe might be permitted to poſtpone giving him the deſired eclairciſſement until his return, which he readily agreed to. They ſat

ſat down to breakfaſt, ſhe wiped off her tears, and endeavoured to eat; ſhe thought that ſeeming to place a confidence in this perſon, would be the moſt probable means of conciliating his benevolence.

He ſat meantime with his eyes fixed on her. He ſeveral times attempted to engage her in converſation, but the deep depreſſion of her ſpirits permitted her only to anſwer by monoſyllables. After breakfaſt he pulled out his watch.

"How I loiter!—fifty miles in ſix hours—good riding faith! adieu my lovely ward, for I will not call you by the hated name of captive—do we not part friends?"

"I hope ſo," ſaid Roſina.

"Well then, wipe away theſe tears; what are they good for, but to dim the luſtre of theſe eyes, which nature formed for purpoſes far different. Do try to ſhake off this dejection, and recover your ſpirits againſt my return; you have no idea how pleaſantly we ſhall paſs our time here! It is rather unfortunate that the ſlaves whom I leave to receive your commands, cannot underſtand one ſyllable of them; but you are not the firſt princeſs

that

that has been caſt by adverſe gales of fortune, amongſt ſavages who ſpoke a barbarous language, ſo you muſt ſubmit to this inconvenience as well as you can. And now adieu, (kiſſing her hands as he ſpoke) ſweet amiable girl; be under no apprehenſion for your ſafety—you ſhall ſee me again, as ſoon as I can get rid of the buſineſs that forces me from you, for the moments will appear ages until my return to you."

## CHAP. XXII.

### CONTINUATION.

THE ſtranger departed; and though Roſina's terrors were greatly abated, ſhe conſidered her ſituation with augmented ſurpriſe and perplexity. Who was this ſtranger, by whom ſhe had been received, and who was ſo evidently of intelligence with the men who had forced her away! he had aſſured her that he was not the agent of Lord Raymond—

Raymond—but how far ought ſhe to rely on the profeſſions of a perſon engaged in ſo baſe a deſign, and who but Lord Raymond could have any intereſt to ſolicit his concurrence with ſo vile a ſcheme.

Bewildered in vague conjecture, the hours paſſed away until the old woman returned to her, to prepare for dinner. Roſina approached not the table, as her old attendant often by ſigns entreated her to do. In the evening ſhe was ſerved with tea and coffee; the old woman evinced in her countenance and geſtures ſo much compaſſion and anxiety, that Roſina, to ſatisfy her, endeavoured to eat. At night ſhe ventured to throw herſelf on the bed in her cloaths, and enjoyed, at intervals, ſome diſturbed and interrupted repoſe.

Thus paſſed away three lingering days in anxious and melancholy reflection, and reſtleſs, though improbable conjecture. Sometimes ſhe revolved the plan of an eſcape; and again became fully conſcious of the impracticability of ſuch a project. At the end of the gallery already mentioned, were large folding doors, which the old woman always carefully locked after her. Weary of the dead and heavy weight of hours ſo dull, ſo melancholy and ſo hopeleſs, Roſina now began to wiſh for the return

turn of the only perſon from whom ſhe could expect an eclairciſſement, with as much ardour as ſhe had before deſired his departure.

On the fourth evening of her diſmal ſecluſion, ſhe heard the folding doors of the gallery ſuddenly fly open, and immediately afterwards the ſtranger entered the room, followed by the old woman, who carried a portmanteau.

"My deareſt girl, (cried he, flying to Roſina) you cannot conceive the impatience with which I have wiſhed for this interview. For heaven's ſake diveſt yourſelf of a little of your diſagreeable prudery, and let me have one kiſs to reward me. See, (continued he, pointing to the portmanteau) I have brought you ſome cloaths, and as you muſt want them ſo much, I ought to apologiſe for not having ſent them ſooner; but I had no perſon to whoſe diſcretion I could entruſt the ſecret of your retreat."

Roſina thanked him for this inſtance of his attention, and ſaid, that 'till that moment ſhe had ſcarcely remembered the want of them.

"And

"And what (returned he) has diverted your attention from a ſubject in general ſo conſequential to your ſex! Was it the idea of your enamoured knight, Lord Raymond, that engroſſed your thoughts?"

"My ſad captivity engroſſed my thoughts," ſaid Roſina.

"Come, come, you muſt learn to ſpeak in another ſtrain—you are ſo lovely in your tears, that in your ſmiles you muſt be irreſiſtible: for ſpite of all the fine things that thoſe lying dogs of poets have ſaid on the ſubject of their miſtreſſes tears, truſt me a red noſe, and blubbered cheeks, are far from being ornamental to the female phyſiognomy: ſo be good natured, and let me ſee you ſmile."

"Smile! (ſaid Roſina, again burſting into tears) how can you thus unfeelingly trifle with my wretchedneſs."

"I wiſh (returned the ſtranger, with more ſeriouſneſs of manner than he had yet aſſumed) from my ſoul I wiſh it were in my power to reſtore you to freedom and tranquillity! but at preſent it is not—all that I can do, I will."

"And

« And if your intentions are benevolent, (cried Roſina) what prevents you from executing them! from reſtoring me to that liberty, to which every human being has a natural right. Am I not here at your abſolute diſpoſal, beneath your own roof? are you not maſter of your own houſe! will not its doors fly open at your command? you diſclaim as injurious to your honour, the idea of your acting under the influence of Lord Raymond; why then do you repreſs thoſe ſentiments of humanity which would lead you to pity and liberate an unhappy, though innocent orphan! is there not an omnipotent power to ſit in judgment on the actions of men—a future ſtate of retribution, to puniſh and to reward? here on my knees, (ſhe continued ſinking at his feet) here, in the preſence of heaven, I implore your compaſſion—I demand your juſtice; and as you ſhall anſwer it at the laſt dreadful tribunal, beware how you refuſe them!"

The ſtranger was ſtruck with the animated energy of her voice and manner.

« Wonderful creature! (he exclaimed, raiſing her in his arms) have we then been miſinformed, and art thou good and virtuous as thou art wiſe and beautiful! or has ſome fatal imprudence deprived

thee of the protection of thy friends, and the privileges of thy birth! for your elegance, your language, your ſentiments, conſpire to convince me, that you cannot be the offſpring of a peaſant."

"A fatal, though not a guilty imprudence, (returned Roſina) has indeed deprived me of the protection of my friends; elſe ſhould I not be entangled in the ſnares by which I now find myſelf ſurrounded. As the motives which now induce me to confide to you my name and my ſtory, are more powerful than any I can have to conceal them, I no longer heſitate to diſcloſe them."

Roſina gave the ſtranger the outline of the particulars relative to her paſt life, which it was neceſſary that he ſhould be made acquainted with. He liſtened with ſurpriſed attention. Truth poſſeſſes a ſecret force that carries irreſiſtible conviction to the heart, and the depoſitions of a thouſand witneſſes could not have more fully authenticated the truth of Roſina's narrative, than her own ſimple teſtimony.

"You are an angel, (ſaid the ſtranger, preſſing her hand to his lips) and Lord Raymond was a ſilly blockhead to ſlight ſuch tenderneſs and worth. However,

However, if he ſhould preſent himſelf before you as your honourable ſuitor, you would not ſurely reject his penitence?"

"It ſhould be rejected with contempt; (returned Roſina) the man who has forfeited every title to my tenderneſs, every claim to my eſteem, ſhall never be my huſband. Whatever Lord Raymond's prevailing views may be, I conceive his policy in thus long abſenting himſelf from my preſence; he wiſhes to leave my reſentment leiſure to ſubſide, and fancies, perhaps, that the rigours of confinement may ſubdue my ſpirit, and overturn my principles. But let him not deceive himſelf with this vain ſuggeſtion; every pang that I ſuffer through the conſequences of his ill treatment, increaſes my ſcorn, and confirms my averſion: he, who a ſhort time ſince, was very dear to me, is become to me an object of hatred and of horror."

"I am glad to find you of this way of thinking, (returned the ſtranger) for to acknowledge the truth, I only ſpoke to make a trial of your ſentiments, for I believe there is little room to fear that his Lordſhip will put you to the trouble of refuſing him; and as to the motive you aſſign for his abſence, I believe you are in that point ſomewhat

miſtaken: in ſuppoſing him apprehenſive of your reſentment, you impute to him rather more modeſty and ſenſibility than he poſſeſſes; he was never much diſtinguiſhed by his timidity, any more than myſelf; and he has been too much accuſtomed to brave the reproaches of injured innocence and beauty, to be greatly affected by them at preſent."

"How then (ſaid Roſina) can you ſtoop to be connected with a perſon, of whoſe character and principles you entertain ſuch an idea."

"My ſweet ward, (ſaid the ſtranger, throwing his arms round her as he ſpoke) I will not attempt to deceive you: I will leave to his Lordſhip the part of the ſanctified hypocrite, and act and ſpeak in my own character. I acknowledge I never had the leaſt ambition to be canonized; heaven was made for ſaints, and earth for ſinners: I am no enemy, any more than his Lordſhip, to the charms of unfettered love, though I never, like him, ſtooped to fraudulent ſubterfuges, to obtain them."

Whilſt the ſtranger ſpoke thus, Roſina thought ſhe diſcovered in his looks and manner, an air of licentiouſneſs that threw her into new agitation. She attempted to riſe, but he held her hands.

"You

"You would leave me, little ingrate; (ſaid he) you would leave me already, although I have ridden almoſt ſeventy miles to day, to enjoy the pleaſure of this interview, and almoſt killed my favorite mare on your account. Come, you muſt liſten to me; you are a divine creature, (continued he, gazing on her with an air of rapture) an angel—quite too much an angel for my purpoſe, I fear—though I feel, too, I ſhall love you moſt devoutly—O would you but transfer to me the place which that worthleſs dog Raymond once held in this lovely boſom of thine!"

"Is this, (ſaid Roſina, ſtruggling to get from him) is this the manner in which you acquit yourſelf of the truſt which the man whom you call your friend, has repoſed in you."

"And who informed you that Lord Raymond has repoſed any ſuch truſt in me? no, faith, he knows me too well; he was not ſuch a fool as *to ſpread his treaſures by an outlaw's den.*"

"Merciful heaven! (cried Roſina) what is to become of me! by what ſtrange accident have I fallen into your hands?"

"By an accident which may be ultimately happy for us both; at leaſt it will be your own fault if it is not. This is all I can reveal at preſent: a ſhort time hence I ſhall probably be more explicit. Mean time, let me entreat you to think more favourably of me than appearances would naturally lead you to do. Forget that reprobate fellow, who merits not your recollection; who never had ſpirit or conſtancy to render himſelf truly beloved by any woman, and whoſe attachment to the loveliest of your ſex, never bound him longer than a few months. A heart of a far different ſtamp, offers itſelf to your acceptance. I wonder that even the novelty of the adventure, does not tempt you to engage in it; how like a pair of turtles might you and I employ our time here, billing and cooing in this ſolitary tower; our love ſecluded from the profane inſpection of every vulgar eye, would flouriſh like a plant of paradiſe; the annals of chivalry can afford nothing comparable to ſuch felicity."

"The annals of chivalry (returned Roſina) contain no inſtance of a princeſs who became enamoured of her goaler."

"Her

"Her goaler! a ſevere appellation—well, and if I releaſe you, will you promiſe to love me then?"

"You cannot be ignorant, (returned Roſina) that no promiſes made under confinement, are valid in the eye of the law."

"Hah! learned in the law too!"

"Eſteem and gratitude, (continued Roſina) I can readily promiſe you, but affection is the involuntary tribute of the ſoul."

"Yet ſince yours (returned the ſtranger) could ſo readily render that tribute to Lord Raymond, I can ſee no reaſon why I have not as good a right to expect and demand it as he had; I am ſure his perſonal charms are nothing extraordinary; I think, without vanity, I may boaſt a ſuperiority in that point. Faith, I wonder that women can admire ſuch effeminate fellows! look at this arm child; if provided with a good herculean club, it would be able to demoliſh twenty ſuch puny pretenders to your favour."

"Perſonal ſtrength, and perſonal beauty, (ſaid Roſina) may enforce admiration, but cannot in-

fluence tenderneſs: love, pure and mental, muſt be inſpired by intellectual attractions, or their fictitious reſemblances. Lord Raymond, you muſt remember, approached me under a borrowed character: the fiend aſſumed the appearance of an angel, and ſpoke the heavenly language of virtue. I had no clue of experience to guide me through the labyrinth of diſſimulation—no ſpear of Ithuriel to force the diſſembler to drop the maſk—but from the moment it fell—from the moment I beheld the lurking demon, and found that the virtues round which my heart had fondly twined its affections, were artificial wiles ſpread to enſnare and captivate an innocent and unſuſpicious breaſt. I ſtarted with horror from the precipice, and my tenderneſs ſeemed to vaniſh with the imaginary fabric that ſupported it."

The ſtranger liſtened to Roſina with an air of ſurpriſed attention; for the remainder of the evening he ſeemed thoughtful, ſpoke little, but often looked at her, and appeared as if revolving in his mind ſomething that related to her. His ſilence filled her with anxiety; ſupper was ſerved; he preſſed her to eat, and ſhe endeavoured to comply; but her heart was full of ſorrow and ſolicitude, and tears flowed from her eyes in ſpite of her efforts to reſtrain

reſtrain them. He appeared diſpleaſed, and ſent away ſupper without eating.

"You are a ſtrange girl, (ſaid he, after a ſilence of ſome minutes) thus to afflict yourſelf without cauſe."

"Without cauſe!" repeated Roſina.

"It is true; (replied he) your ſituation may appear alarming, but it is in reality much leſs ſo than you have reaſon to imagine it. If you have not deceived me in the account you have given of yourſelf, all will yet be well."

"I never deceived any one," ſaid Roſina.

"I firmly believe it, (returned the ſtranger) your words contain a confirmation, *ſtrong as proofs of holy writ.* Will you then as implicitly rely on mine? will you ſuffer yourſelf to be perſuaded that I intend you no injury. O why theſe tears and tremors! you are weakened by watching and vexation: go and try to recruit your ſpirits by repoſe; take a glaſs of wine, and go to bed. I am not the licentious libertine you ſeem to imagine me; I never yet broke a promiſe I gave to one of your

ſex, and ſhall I begin by falſifying my word with you, who appear in my eyes the moſt ingenuous, as well as the lovelieſt of women! fear nothing, your repoſe ſhall be as inviolate as if it was guarded by angels."

"God bleſs you! (ſaid Roſina, to whoſe agitated boſom theſe aſſurances brought confidence and conſolation) and God will bleſs you for your compaſſion to an unhappy orphan!"

Roſina, whoſe ſtrong ſenſibility often led her beyond the precincts of ſtrict punctilio, took his hand and kiſſed it as ſhe ſpoke. He haſtily withdrew his hand.

"Beware, Roſina, (ſaid he, ſmiling) I tell you candidly I cannot bear much encouragement. It is my wiſh and my intention to be very diſtant—very reſpectful—and all that—but you muſt keep me at bay. I confeſs I cannot receive from you the ſlighteſt careſs, without feeling a ſtrong inclination to return it ten fold; and I ſuppoſe, if I attempted to take the moſt innocent liberty, I ſhould have you again at your tears and your tremors."

He

He rung, and the old woman appearing, "Go, (ſaid he to Roſina) whilſt I can prevail on myſelf to part with you."

"At leaſt, (ſaid Roſina) you will allow me to pray for you, ſo good night, and God bleſs you!"

Though the ſtrange and myſterious uncertainty of her ſituation ſtill continued, nay ſeemed to increaſe; for the ſtranger had explicitly enough denied her having been committed to his care by Lord Raymond; and though the growing paſſion of this ſtranger, which was too evident to paſs unnoticed, opened to her view new proſpects of diſtreſs and diſquietude, ſhe yet felt the firmeſt reliance on his aſſurances, and for the firſt time ſince her captivity, enjoyed the ſalutary refreſhment of a quiet repoſe.

## CHAP. XXIII.

### A MODERN EPISTLE.

WHEN Roſina awoke in the morning, ſhe conceived a hope of perſuading the ſtranger to ſuffer her to write to Mrs. Fitzoſborne, the idea of whoſe diſpleaſure hung like a heavy weight upon her heart, and, of all her diſtreſſes, appeared the moſt inſupportable. Full of this idea, ſhe aroſe, and finding the portmanteau of cloaths which had been provided for her, ſhe equipped herſelf, and went into the breakfaſt-room at leaſt an hour before the uſual time of breakfaſt. There was no one in the room: on the table lay an unfiniſhed letter, on which Roſina firſt glanced her eye without curioſity, till recollecting that it might probably contain ſomething relative to herſelf, ſhe approached the table, ſtill heſitating and doubtful whether a ſituation like her's warranted a deviation from that

that ſtrict rule of rectitude which in every former circumſtance had invariably influenced her conduct. After a moment's reflection, ſhe thought herſelf fully authoriſed to read the letter, which ran in the following ſtrain.

My Lord,

THAT blundering booby has led us into a damned hobble. The perſon whom he repreſented as the daughter of a gardener, turns out to be a young lady of family, nearly related to the Fitzoſbornes of Ireland, and by them reared and educated. You know it was with extreme reluctance I engaged in this buſineſs, which now threatens the moſt ſerious conſequences to us both. There is little doubt that on the young lady's enlargement you will be proſecuted for forcibly carrying her away, and I for falſe impriſonment, though an indictment on either ground might be ſufficient for us both. I am really extremely perplexed, and entreat your lordſhip will favour me with your inſtructions by return of poſt. I hope you will deviſe ſome means of extricating me from an affair in which I had no motive to engage me but a zeal for your ſervice. The young lady is of unblemiſhed reputation; and were you to ſee her, you would not be ſurpriſed at Lord Raymond's paſſion for her.

Her

Her charms "*might warm the cold boſom of age:*" they have ſet mine completely in a glow.

I have a great notion that Harris intends to peach: he grumbled ſo much at his allotted reward, that I was obliged to ſtop the dog's throat with twenty guineas more. His underſtrappers, too, ſqueezed ten a-piece out of me. There is no ſatisfying the rapacity of theſe raſcals: it is altogether a damnable piece of buſineſs.

As to our election, Crawford will undoubtedly be thrown out. I always knew he wanted ſpirit to bleed freely. But, to confeſs the truth, our voters are become ſo deviliſhly exorbitant in their demands, that a candidate ſhould poſſeſs the power which fable attributes to Midas, of converting every thing he touches to gold. At all events, however, you may bring him in for the borough.

Things went on better at the aſſizes ———

———

Roſina ſtood with the unfiniſhed letter in her hand, loſt in aſtoniſhment, and utterly unable to conjecture to whom it was addreſſed, or for what purpoſe

purpoſe a nobleman, who was evidently a ſtranger to her name, her quality, and her perſon, could have contrived this iniquitous plan of forcing her away. The ſtranger entered.

"So (ſaid he) you have read my letter!"

"I have read it," ſaid Roſina.

"And do you think ſuch a gratification of curioſity conſiſtent with thoſe high-flown ideas of equity which, on other ſubjects, you affect to profeſs?"

"In different circumſtances I ſhould not, (ſaid Roſina;) but, ſituated as I am, am I blameable if I ſeize any lights which accident may throw in my way, to clear the darkneſs that ſurrounds me?"

"Well, and what lights have you found?"

"None, I confeſs. The letter I have read ſerves but to increaſe my wonder and perplexity."

"It is undoubtedly a very ſtrange affair, (returned he.) You ſee by this letter you have been confided to my care by the perſon to whom it is addreſſed

addreſſed. This, then, may teach you to ceaſe your ſolicitations for liberty; for you cannot ſuppoſe me baſe enough to be faithleſs to my truſt."

"To a truſt of ſo vile a nature, (returned Roſina,) it is infinitely more baſe to be faithful. But who is this perſon, this peer? and what intereſt can he poſſibly have in confining me, to whom he is an utter ſtranger, in this dungeon?"

"You muſt learn to repreſs this fruitleſs curioſity: when I am at liberty, I will ſatisfy all your doubts; meantime, let us chuſe ſome other ſubject, for it is a pity that you, who ſpeak ſo prettily, ſhould ever ſpeak in vain."

"Ah! (ſaid Roſina,) when the heart is overburthened with ſorrow, it will naturally expatiate on thoſe ſubjects which lie moſt heavily on it. But I will aſk no more queſtions, ſince you deſire I ſhould not. I have a requeſt to make you."

"What is it?"

"You muſt be conſcious from what I have told you of my ſtory, that did I not eſteem the approbation of my friend and benefactreſs as my firſt and deareſt

deareſt bleſſing, I ſhould be the moſt ungrateful and worthleſs of human beings. Think, then, how cruel an aggravation of my affliction muſt be the knowledge that my conduct has been vilified to that friend, and how tormenting the conviction that my flight, which muſt be ſuppoſed voluntary, will ſtrongly corroborate the aſperſions which have already been caſt on my character. Suffer me, then, to write to Mrs. Fitzoſborne; even three words, Your Roſina is innocent! would ſuffice for my vindication; for ſhe knows, that whatever may be my errors and frailties, it is not in my nature to deceive her."

"My dear girl, how could you ſuppoſe I could conſent to ſuch a ſcheme! You muſt certainly either take me for an ideot, or deſign to make me one. Can you imagine me ſuch a fool as to give your friends a clue to unravel the myſtery of your detention in this place, which, on every account, it is ſo much my intereſt to conceal."

"I would afford them no clue, (ſaid Roſina.) I would write but a few words, and you ſhould yourſelf ſee them."

"Even

"Even the poſt-mark of your letter might afford one. Were I inclined to deceive you, I might take your letter, and tell you I had ſent it; but you ſee it is my wiſh to treat you with candour and generoſity, if you will allow me. From what I have gathered from your narrative, Mrs. Fitzoſborne intends you for her ſon; that ſon, too, loves you, Roſina."

"I never ſaid ſo, (replied Roſina;) it is true, his mother wiſhed us to form an union, and Hector Fitzoſborne always treated me with the tendereſt affection; but it was almoſt that ſpecies of affection which a brother might experience for a ſiſter."

"Almoſt! (repeated the ſtranger.) I think you have ſaid young Fitzoſborne is handſome, ſenſible, elegant, and accompliſhed."

"I have ſaid ſo (returned Roſina;) he is indeed eminently amiable, and ſeems to unite the ſeducing ſoftneſs of the female ſex with the energy of character that diſtinguiſhes his own."

The ſtranger's cheek glowed: he bit his lip.

"Roſina

"Roſina (ſaid he) you muſt not, for the preſent at leaſt, have any intercourſe with theſe Fitzoſbornes. If a plan which I meditate can be effected, you ſhall return to them, and return with honour; your innocence triumphant over malice, and your reputation cleared from every opprobrium. But for the preſent you muſt think no more of them."

"Not think of them! (cried Roſina,) not think of my generous friend, my more than mother, and her amiable Hector, the beloved companion of my childhood! Dear friends, to whom I am indebted for the little my deſtiny has left me, my innocence, my probity, the ſacred conſolations of conſcious integrity, whilſt memory holds her ſeat in this boſom, its firſt pure affection ſhall be conſecrated to your virtues!"

"You are very romantic (ſaid the ſtranger, knitting his brows.) You would do better to repreſs theſe fruitleſs effuſions of gratitude, or ſhare them with a friend who can ſerve you: at preſent the Fitzoſbornes cannot."

"I have no friend but them," ſaid Roſina.

"And

"And it is evident from your conduct, that you deſire to have no other. My friendſhip you deem not worth the pains of acquiring."

"Good Heaven! (ſaid Roſina,) how can I eſteem the friendſhip of a perſon whom I have never ſeen until within theſe eight days! a perſon, too, with whom I formed an acquaintance under circumſtances ſo unfavourable. Friendſhip is free and independent. Will the ſlave behold a friend in the cruel taſk-maſter who confines and puniſhes him?"

"'Tis well (cried the ſtranger, riſing in a rage.) Notwithſtanding the generous treatment you have received from me, I ſee the light in which I am regarded. But there are ſome natures which are only to be ſubdued by ill uſage, perhaps." He ſtopped abruptly.

"I meant not to offend you," ſaid Roſina, greatly alarmed at his diſpleaſure.

"You meant not to offend me! What elſe could you mean by ſuch language? Laſt night I was honoured with the title of your gaoler, and to-day I am complimented with the odious appellation of taſk-maſter."

"Perhaps

"Perhaps I have been to blame (ſaid Roſina, diſſolving in tears;) but ſurely the fretfulneſs incident to affliction ſuch as mine may claim ſome indulgence."

"And why will you thus afflict yourſelf? (ſaid he, approaching her with a ſoftened accent.) O, theſe tears are powerful auxiliaries! When you have inflamed your indignation by your pride, your obſtinacy, and perverſeneſs, you have only to open theſe ready ſluices, and extinguiſh every ſentiment of reſentment. Strange, faſcinating creatures! what an unaccountable impulſe is this which forces us to adore you even at the moment when you treat us with hatred and contempt."

He ſeized her hands, and kiſſed them in a tranſport that ſeemed to be compounded of fondneſs and anger.

"Come, wipe off your tears, and eat your breakfaſt (ſaid he;) don't be a fool any longer. Before the expiration of a month, I hope you will have reaſon to acknowledge me to be your beſt and trueſt friend."

CHAP.

## CHAP. XXIV.

### MORE CONVERSATION.

And now her eye's ſoft radiance ſeem'd to fail,
And now the crimſon of her cheek grew pale;
The lily there, in faded beauty, ſhews
Its ſickly empire o'er the vanquiſh'd roſe.

MISS MOORE.

THUS, for five days longer, did Roſina paſs her hours with this perſon, who, though every hour ſeemed to increaſe his prepoſſeſſion for her, ſtill obſtinately refuſed an explanation of thoſe myſterious appearances which tortured her mind with a reſtleſs curioſity: and though he kept within the bounds of the diſtant reſpect ſhe impoſed on him, it was eaſy to perceive that this circumſpection often coſt him no trifling exertion of ſelf-com-

mand. It is true, Roſina no longer loved Lord Raymond, but her tenderneſs had been ſucceeded by a melancholy void which damped every ſentiment of pleaſure, and prompted the inceſſant ſigh of ineffectual regret. But, though her boſom had been free from even the ſlighteſt trace of a prior attachment, the impetuous and ungentle manners of this ſtranger, who was utterly unverſed in that ſoft inſinuative art which by eaſy and unperceived approaches glides into the inmoſt foldings of the boſom, was little calculated to attach the affections of ſuch a heart as Roſina's. Her invincible melancholy often incenſed him: he ſometimes reproached, and ſometimes ſoothed her; ſometimes he attempted to diſſipate it by pleaſantry, and often to vanquiſh it by expoſtulation; and frequently, on finding it withſtand all his exertions, he ſunk into a gloomy moroſeneſs that filled her with apprehenſion.

Corroded, meantime, with afflictive retroſpects of the paſt, harraſſed with perpetual alarms, and tormented with melancholy forebodings, Roſina entirely loſt her appetite; ſhe ſcarcely ſlept five minutes at a time, her ſpirits were to the laſt degree exhauſted, and her conſtitution proportionably enfeebled. On the fifth evening, as ſhe ſat at ſupper

upper with the ſtranger, he obſerved that ſhe turned aſide, when ſhe thought herſelf unperceived by him, to wipe away her tears.

"I can endure it no longer!" ſaid he, riſing in a paſſion.

"What?" ſaid Roſina, ſtarting.

"Your obſtinacy and perverſeneſs. I ſee you are determined to kill yourſelf."

"Well (ſaid Roſina) my death would rid you of a burthen, and myſelf of a much greater. Ah, would to Heaven it were ſo eaſy to die!"

"You ſpeak in this ſtrain on purpoſe to torment me, becauſe you know I cannot live without you."

"Your life then (ſaid Roſina) is likely to be of ſhort duration."

"Perhaps not; perhaps, perverſe as you are, I may yet prevent you from deſtroying us both. Affairs muſt be brought to a ſpeedy iſſue. I cannot ſupport the delays of the poſt: I will ſet out for

for London to morrow morning. Shall I bring you any thing? Can I do any thing for you?"

"You can do much for me," returned Roſina.

"What can I do? Let me for once have the gratification of pleaſing you."

"You can reſtore me to liberty," ſaid Roſina.

"Liberty! liberty! Can my ſweet penſive nightingale ſing no note but liberty in her cage? "I cannot get out, I cannot get out," would ſuit you much better: for indeed, Roſina, you cannot get out, at leaſt not at preſent."

"I have nothing more to ſay, then (ſaid Roſina) if my doom be fixed, if there be no appeal to reaſon or humanity ——

"O, let us hear no more of them! I am ſick of theſe hackneyed terms. You are like other ſpecious pretenders: they dwell for ever on your lips, but that impenetrable boſom denies them admittance. There is neither reaſon in thus fooliſhly and cauſeleſsly afflicting yourſelf, nor humanity in thus miſerably tormenting me."

"I wiſh not to torment you (ſaid Roſina.) I would be glad to make you happy, if I could."

"You can make me happy (cried he, approaching her in a tranſport) inexpreſſibly happy; but not by this coldneſs and averſion, not by thus ſhrinking with trembling apprehenſion from my touch, and evincing this perpetual diffidence of my honour."

"I diſtruſt not your honour (ſaid Roſina.) I will believe, that, notwithſtanding appearances, you are a good man, and will deal by me with integrity."

"By Heaven, I intend it! (cried he, catching her to his breaſt;) and the man who could do otherwiſe, muſt be a brute and a villain. Loveliеſt and ſweeteſt of human creatures, fear nothing: in your own innocence and purity you poſſeſs an inviolable protection. And now, will you not afford me one good wiſh to ſpeed me on my journey?"

"Yes, a thouſand," ſaid Roſina.

"My deareſt Roſina, my good angel, and will you not wiſh for my return?"

"Yes

"Yes (ſaid Roſina) for I ſhall hope you go to effect my deliverance."

"And on that account only you will wiſh for it?"

"I ſhall be glad to ſee you."

"O, how colder than ſnow, how harder than adamant, is this boſom, which, were we to judge by the ſenſibility of your eyes, we ſhould ſuppoſe to be the reſidence of the gentleſt ſuſceptibility. Yet tell me, Roſina, when you hereafter find me worthy of your affection, will you not love me?"

"I love you!" ſaid Roſina.

"And what, Madam, is there in the ſuppoſition ſo ſtrange and unnatural, as thus to excite your aſtoniſhment?"

Roſina pauſed; and, fearful of irritating him, thought it beſt to temporize a little.

"I diſpute not your claim to the affections of women in every reſpect my ſuperiors (replied ſhe) but, ſituated as I am at preſent,—my breaſt, too,

ſtill ſmarting with the diſappointment of a recent attachment ———

"Hang him for a worthleſs wretch! (interrupted he.) If you are the girl of ſpirit I take you to be, you will never throw away another thought on him. I ſuppoſe by this time he has got himſelf almoſt married to Lady Elinor, and God give him joy of his bargain. A man would go a damned way for money, and I am as ſenſible as another of its value; but I would ſooner blow my brains out with a piſtol, than tie myſelf for life to ſuch a little ugly, inſipid, fooliſh, deformed, red-haired toad."

"But I conceived (ſaid Roſina) that this treaty with Lady Elinor was entirely the work of the Earl, who endeavoured to force his ſon into a connexion he abhorred."

"A connexion he abhorred! ha, ha! See what it is to be a courtier, and know how to whine and whimper, and tell lies with a good grace. The ſon was quite as earneſt for the match as the father, and actually carried on a correſpondence with his intended bride whilſt he continued in Wales, laying ſchemes to inveigle you, in whoſe beauty and tenderneſs, I ſuppoſe, he expected to find a re-

compence for the heavy hours of matrimonial dullneſs and diſguſt, which decency would oblige him to paſs with his little crooked rib."

"Abominable wretch!" exclaimed Roſina, whilſt her face glowed with indignation."

"And yet this wretch, abominable as he is, could find the way to that little fooliſh, undiſcerning heart of thine, whilſt a plain, honeſt man, who truly loves you, knocks in vain for admittance. But all this is foreign to my purpoſe. Will you promiſe to love me, if I releaſe you from your captivity?"

"How (ſaid Roſina) can I promiſe for my feelings at a future period? I am however convinced, that I can never love any one whilſt I continue in this hated confinement."

"Ah, thou crafty one! Thou wouldeſt throw out an artful bait of hope to allure me! Well, on my return we will talk more of theſe matters."

He departed the next morning at day-break.

## CHAP. XXV.

### AN UNEXPECTED PROPOSAL.

ROSINA, thus left a prey to her own melancholy reflections, felt the heavineſs of dejection augmented by the gloom of ſolitude: ſhe ſunk into a ſtate of mind not eaſily deſcribed: ſhe felt a ſlow fever preying upon her conſtitution: the buſy power of thought agitated her br in with a reſtleſs activity that ſeemed almoſt to threaten the diſarrangement of her intellects. Her pillow afforded no refuge from the tormentor. If her eyes were cloſed by tranſient and broken ſlumbers, it purſued her feveriſh and bewildered imagination with dreadful phantoms of deſpair and horror: it ſeemed to beat inceſſantly in her heart, and to throb in every vein. Death, for the firſt time, preſented itſel'

itſelf to her imagination, not as the object of horror, but of hope. This was a ſubject on which Roſina, young and beautiful, careſſed and happy, had hitherto reflected but little. In the gay, thoughtleſs hour of feſtive enjoyment, death appears to the imagination as a hideous ſpectre; terror and diſmay follow in its train; the flowers of fancy wither at its approach, and the ſoft muſic of her enchanted ſphere is loſt in ſorrowful ſilence, or exchanged for ſad notes of ſorrow and lamentation. It is the viſitations of pain, of ſorrow, and of ſickneſs, that teach the gloomy and perturbed ſpirit to wander like a melancholy ſpectre through the dreary regions of mortality; to haunt "the vale funereal, the ſad cypreſs gloom!" and hover with keen anticipation over the laſt refuge of miſery and deſpair. To die! to ſleep! to ſteep in eternal oblivion thoſe exquiſitely tormenting ſenſations which corroded her tortured boſom with anguiſh almoſt intolerable! it was "a conſummation devoutly to be wiſhed." But a ſting remained. To die unjuſtified, to ſink to the grave loaded with aſperſion, her memory left a prey to calumny and detraction, without one friend to vindicate her injured innocence, one tender boſom to receive her departing ſighs, or one pious hand to cloſe her expiring eye-lids."

In ſuch gloomy meditations Roſina paſſed away her heavy hours, until the ninth evening after the departure of the ſtranger, as ſhe ſat alone in the apartment deſtined to her uſe, he abruptly entered it, and flying to her, caught her in his arms.

Roſina, weak, exhauſted, and terrified at his impetuoſity, turned pale and trembled.

" My love, my Roſina (cried he) for now I will call you mine, why this emotion? O, that I might interpret it as I could wiſh! Look up. I bring you glad tidings of liberty and joy. Will you not ſpeak to your deliverer, your friend, your huſband?"

" My huſband! (repeated Roſina, ſtarting from him in unſpeakable aſtoniſhment.) Surely you are frantic!"

" Yes faith, half frantic with joy at the proſpect of the felicity which awaits us both! I will now clear up all your doubts, and unravel every myſtery. But I am extremely fatigued. I have travelled ſeven hundred miles ſince I ſaw you. Let us firſt get a glaſs of wine; and as ſoon as I can recollect myſelf, I will tell you every thing."

But,

But, as there were ſome circumſtances neceſſary to the developement of this myſterious tranſaction, with which the ſtranger was imperfectly acquainted, and others which, for his own credit, he judged it expedient to ſuppreſs, we ſhall preſent our readers with a more exact and impartial detail of them than that with which he thought proper to gratify Roſina.

## CHAP. XXVI.

### EXPLOITS OF THE LITTLE CROOKBACK.

THE reader will recollect, that the ſame morning on which Richard, by his machinations, had ſent off Nettleby and his companions poſt-haſte to Ireland, he had himſelf ſet out for London, attended by his truſty 'ſquire, Gryffith ap Jenkin, exulting in the ſucceſs of his manœuvres, and little imagining the diſtreſs and perplexity of which they were to be productive to poor Roſina.

As it was late in the evening when he arrived in London, he thought it adviſeable to ſpend that night at an inn, and defer viſiting the Earl, his uncle, at whoſe houſe he purpoſed to remain during his continuance in town, until the next day. Accordingly, he had no ſooner ſwallowed his breakfaſt the enſuing morning, than he ſtrode off to Pall Mall; but being detained by ſtopping to gaze at every object which excited his curioſity in his way, it was one o'clock when he reached the magnificent reſidence of his noble kinſman. When he knocked at the door, the porter, who was little accuſtomed to viſitants of ſo uncouth an appearance, demanded his buſineſs in a ſurly tone.

"What's that to you, you impertinent old hedgehog? (cried Richard.) My buſineſs is with the Earl, my uncle; and it is a crying ſhame for him to keep you here, like an old ſurly bull-dog, to ſnap and ſnarl at every one that enters his doors."

"Your uncle! (cried a footman, who juſt then croſſed the hall.) I fancy, friend, you are miſtaken. This houſe belongs to the Earl of L——."

"I fancy,

"I fancy, Mr. Jackanapes, I am not miſtaken. I know who it belongs to as well as you can tell me. I believe I have been in it before ever you were, and ſhall again, after you are hanged, in all probability."

This uncommon inſolence began to impreſs the footman with ſome degree of reſpect. This, he thought, was not the ſtyle of a poor relation, or petitioner for charity or preferment. None, he imagined, but a perſon of conſequence would dare to aſſume a tone ſo haughty and contemptuous; and, on taking a ſecond view of the figure of Richard, he even began to fancy that he diſcerned ſomething of the air of a youth of faſhion in the negligence of his diſhabille; for appearances, he knew, are often in this reſpect deceitful: he therefore aſked in a more ſubmiſſive tone who he ſhould acquaint the Earl deſired to ſee him.

"You need tell him nothing about the matter (cried Richard:) he'll know that when he ſees me; and I want to treat him with an agreeable ſurpriſe. I tell you, raſcal, he'll be ready to leap out of his ſkin, and jump for joy, at the ſight of me."

The

The ſervant ſtared.

"What does the booby ſtare at?"

"His Lordſhip is at preſent engaged with his Grace the Duke of B——— (returned the footman) and gave poſitive orders that ———"

"His grace the duke of fiddleſtick (interrupted Richard.) I tell you, you impertinent cur, I will lug theſe powdered ears of yours, if you don't bring me to him immediately. Do you think I have travelled three hundred miles to ſtand here jawing with you all day."

The footman, confuſed and heſitating, caſt his eyes towards a door at the farther end of the hall. Richard tranſlated the look with his accuſtomed ſagacity; and ſkipping towards it, thruſt the ſervant aſide when he attempted to prevent his opening it, and without ceremony bolted into the apartment, where the Earl of L——, and the Duke of B——, father of Lady Elinor Leſley, were engaged in deep confabulation.

"How do you do, uncle? (cried Richard, ſtriding up to the Duke, whoſe figure firſt happened to attract

tract his attention, and ſhaking him heartily by the hand,) how do you do, uncle? I am very glad to ſee you. I hope you enjoy good health. I am rejoiced to find you in ſuch a fine ſtate of preſervation. By Jove, you are a hearty old buck as any I know of your ſtanding, fat and jolly, egad."

The Duke received this rough ſalutation in ſilent aſtoniſhment, whilſt the Earl, beginning to recollect Richard, whoſe figure, if once ſeen, was not eaſily forgotten, exclaimed, "Richard Evelyn!"

Richard, on hearing his name pronounced, inſtantly perceived his miſtake; and ſkipping up to the Earl, whoſe long ſkeleton figure he inſtantly recogniſed, cried out, "So, I have been out in my reckoning, it ſeems. Lord, how could I be ſo miſtaken! Faith, uncle, I was wondering how you came by ſo much good fleſh on your bones; for I remember you were always one of Pharaoh's lean kine! Well, I am heartily rejoiced to ſee you, nevertheleſs."

The Earl's firſt idea was to enquire of Richard for his ſon; but fearing leſt the queſtion might lead

lead to explanations which the preſence of the Duke might render diſagreeable and inconvenient, he thought it ſafer to repreſs his curioſity for the preſent; and deſiring Richard to be ſeated, made ſome trivial enquiries relative to his journey, the weather, &c. and, amongſt others, how long he meant to continue in London? racking his invention, meantime, for ſome plan to be ſpeedily rid of him."

Richard replied that he ſhould not ſtay above a week or ten days; "only long enough (continued he) to get myſelf decently rigged, and ſee any ſights worth ſeeing: for you muſt know my mother is bent upon making a ſcholar of me; and ſo, at long run, ſhe has perſuaded me to put myſelf under the care and tuition of ſome old codger that lives near London, and keeps a ſort of academy for grown gentlemen: ſo I reſolved not to paſs ſo near London without taking my fling a little, and coming to ſpend ſome ſhort time with you; for I thought, uncle, that was the leaſt I could do."

"I am exceedingly obliged to you (returned the Earl.) I certainly regard this viſit as a particular favour. But ——"

"O,

"O, as to its being any great favour (interrupted Richard) I think nothing at all about it; it is quite a matter of friendſhip, and there is no great compliment on any ſide."

"Pray, where do you lodge, couſin Richard?" aſked the Earl, who meant to inſinuate by the queſtion that he underſtood not that it was Richard's intention to take up his abode in his manſion.

"Why, laſt night I lodged at the inn we put up at (replied Richard.) I would have come here to you directly, indeed, only that it was not ſo convenient to get my luggage brought here at that time of night, and I ſhould have been deviliſhly afraid to leave it behind me; for the newſpapers are ſo ſtuffed with the rogueries of your London ſharpers and ſwindlers, that it makes a perſon keep a ſharp look-out, you ſee. Beſides, I was afraid of not finding you at home, ſo I reſolved to keep to my quarters."

"A very diſcreet reſolution (replied his Lordſhip.) I am indeed very ſeldom at home, either evening or morning; and it happens moſt peculiarly unlucky that I have at preſent more engagements

gagements of buſineſs than I have ever yet been burthened with, which muſt inevitably deprive me of the pleaſure which, in other circumſtances, I might promiſe myſelf in your ſociety. But, during the ſhort ſtay you intend to make, I ſhould think you might find agreeable and comfortable accommodation at the London Coffee-Houſe."

"O, as to that (ſaid Richard) it is the leaſt of my thoughts to go to any ſuch place. When a man has a near relation's houſe to go to, it would be a very unnatural thing of him to prefer a ſtrange place. I believe Gryffith will be here with my trunks and luggage in half an hour."

"Here with your trunks and luggage! (exclaimed his Lordſhip.) You intend, then, to fix your abode here."

"Aye, to be ſure I do (replied Richard.) Where elſe ſhould I go, but to my own uncle's houſe!"

A pauſe enſued, during which Richard had leiſure to obſerve, that his noble uncle was not ſo greatly delighted with his promiſed viſitation as he had promiſed himſelf he ſhould have found him.

"It

« It is indeed very unfortunate (ſaid the Earl) that your viſit ſhould be made at a ſeaſon when it is utterly out of my power to receive you as I could wiſh. Had you been ſo obliging as to give me previous notice of the favour you intended me, I ſhould have contrived to have been prepared for your reception. But at preſent, as I have workmen in every apartment in my houſe, though it diſtreſſes me extremely, I really have not a chamber to offer you."

The doubts which Richard had already begun to entertain concerning the cordiality of his reception, were conſiderably augmented by this converſation; but he determined to try his Lordſhip's ſincerity ſtill farther.

« O, as to that matter (ſaid he) a garret will ſerve my turn as well as the beſt room in your houſe. You know I have been uſed to clear air, up in the Welſh mountains; and, in reſpect to your being ſo much engaged, it would be very unreaſonable in me to expect you to ſtay at home to entertain me. All you have to do, is to give your ſervants a great charge to make much of me. I warrant I'll fadge well enough for as long as I have to ſtay."

« It

"It would be highly improper, Mr. Evelyn (replied the Earl in a fret) to devolve on my ſervants the care of entertaining you, and what my reſpect for your family will by no means permit me to agree to. Circumſtanced as I am at preſent, this viſit was really very mal a propos. I am juſt now engaged on buſineſs of the utmoſt importance with this nobleman, the Duke of B———, whoſe time is of too much conſequence to the public welfare, to be waſted in attending to our converſation. I muſt therefore entreat you will have the goodneſs to retire to another apartment, if it ſhould not be agreeable to you at preſent to ſhorten your viſit. You will rejoice me extremely by favouring me with your company at ſome other period; and you may depend upon my ſending to requeſt that pleaſure the very firſt moment that I find myſelf at liberty to enjoy it."

"O dear (ſaid Richard, diſſembling his reſentment, and determined to torment him as much as poſſible.) Surely, if you have any buſineſs to ſettle with that other old gentleman, I can readily leave you to yourſelves for an hour or two. I can call into Weſtminſter Abbey, to ſee if the old Grecians have got their jackets bruſhed ſince I ſaw them laſt. Then I can juſt ſtep down to the

water ſide, to viſit my old friends, the lions in the Tower, and ſo take a turn back to my inn, clap on a clean ſhirt, get my nob drudged, and be with you at dinner."

"It is impoſſible for me to have the honour of your company to-day (ſaid the Earl, impatiently.) I have been engaged for this day theſe five weeks."

"Well, you know I was no conjuror to tell that," ſaid Richard.

Here another pauſe enſued, which was ſucceded by ſome general converſation between the noblemen. Richard, meantime, fully convinced that this loving uncle, from whom he had promiſed himſelf the moſt affectionate reception, and the moſt hoſpitable entertainment, wiſhed only for a pretence to be decently rid of him, ſat in ſilent diſpleaſure, meditating revenge; and the miſchievous dæmon, whoſe inſpirations he ſo implicitly obeyed, ſoon ſuggeſted to him a mode of retaliation, which promiſed him ample compenſation for the affront he had received.

END OF VOL. IV.

JUST PUBLISHED,

THE

# NOBLE ENTHUSIAST;

A

## MODERN ROMANCE:

IN THREE VOLUMES.

6 MA65

I took it for a fairy vision
Of ſome gay *creature* of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow *lives*,
And plays i' th' plighted clouds.

MILTON.

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